The WESTMINSTER YOUNG PEOPLE'S QUARTERLY

International Uniform Lessons

April, May, June, 1924

Prepared by
Hugh T. Kerr, D.D., LL.D.

Edited by
John T. Faris, D.D.

Publication Department of the
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"GET THE HABIT"

"I have no patience with this talk about habits," a business man said, when a clerk, reprimanded for being late, said that he was trying to break the habit of oversleeping. "It isn't manly to have a habit. Any afternoon you can see scores of people standing in line, waiting for entrance to the biggest vaudeville theater in town. Above the door of that theater are the words 'Get the habit!' Many young men and young women in that line have obeyed the mandate—they have formed the habit of going to that place a day or two every week; I pass the line so often that I expect to see certain faces there. They are the slaves of a habit that is injuring their usefulness."

The speaker was right, of course, but he was stating only half a truth. A habit is not necessarily a bad thing to form; there are habits and habits. A person may be the slave of his habits, or his habits may be his servants. It is easy to form the habits that enslave us; we need only to drift. But it is an entirely different matter to form the habits that help. Definite determination and continued struggle to live according to the determination are necessary. "None of us can live well by an occasional good resolution. Everything depends on storing up in ourselves, by a habit of well-doing, a great and ever-increasing fund of moral power, which shall be available to brace us against sudden temptation, to help us to carry out better purposes, and to hold us steady and true to the ideal." Thus we will come ever nearer to realizing what has been called the ideal of human life, "in which all that is good has become sheer habit, and all that is bad is so contrary to nature that it gives us even a physically perceptible and painful shock."

For the formation of good habits Professor William James once gave this sound counsel: "First, it is important to get all one's minor habits—such as hours of rising and retiring and hours of work—fixed and automatic in early life, thus giving the higher activities of the mind a chance for unfettered development during the years of maturity. Second, start any new habit you have resolved to form with a strong initiative. Be prompt at your first engagement, punctual in your hours of work, or whatever else you have undertaken to do. A good start affords a strong impetus to continue in the same

direction. Third, do not allow an exception of any kind with a newly formed habit. This is like dropping a ball of twine which you have begun to wind up. You will lose a great deal more by one fall than you can gain in the same length of time by your hardest exertions. Fourth, never consider a habit or a principle fixed unless you have carried it out in an action."

But the best guides for the formation of habits that help were given by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. Turn to this and pick them out.

THEY COME, THEY DISCUSS, THEY STAY

BY HOWARD PRATT WALL

The Junior Young Men's Bible Class of the Woodland Presbyterian Bible School, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, an organization of about thirty young men between the ages of seventeen and twenty-

Junior Young Men's Bible Class, Woodland Presbyterian Bible School, Philadelphia

one, was organized eight years ago. It grew out of a class in the Intermediate Department. The membership has increased so rapidly that twice the class has had to seek larger quarters. It now meets in a room on the gallery, which explains the common name of the group, the Balcony Class.

The members include students from the University of Pennsylvania, Haverford College, Penn Charter School, West Philadelphia High School, and also young men in business. Over ninety per cent of the members belong to the Church.

The enthusiasm of the class is expressed in many ways. A voluntary fund has been started, under the care of the treasurer, which will be used for mission and relief work. At Christmas, the class took entire charge of the Sunday school's Christmas entertainment. Interest in class athletics centers in an organized basketball team.

Under the leadership of the teacher, a university-trained man, the class has spirited discussions of the lesson. In one instance the meeting lasted an hour and a half over the dismissal time of the school. From time to time men from outside address the class on timely religious subjects.

CHRISTIAN LIVE WIRES

Christian Live Wires is the name of the young people's Sunday-school class of the Presbyterian Church at Broadwater, Nebraska.

Christian Live Wires, Broadwater Presbyterian Church, Broadwater, Nebraska

Broadwater is a village of less than five hundred population situated in the Platte Valley, western Nebraska. Organized some half-dozen years ago, with only a small membership, the class has made a steady growth until the present enrollment numbers thirty-six. It has its own room in the basement of the church. Class expenses are defrayed by retaining in the class treasury two cents for each member present when the offering is taken. During the year quite a number of social events are held, such as Wiener roasts and parties, all of which help maintain the class spirit. Recently, the young people, with the assistance of the Christian Endeavor Society, purchased a stereopticon for the use of the pastor in connection with occasional Sunday evening sermons.

SHALL WE GIVE THEM WHAT THEY WANT?

BY FRANK D. GETTY

There has been considerable discussion recently regarding the improvement or the decline in the young people of to-day. Some leaders think that they are very much worse than the young people of several generations ago, while others take the opposite view and insist that all the changes that have taken place in the younger generation are for the better. It is not our purpose to enter the field of this discussion, but rather would we extract one of the arguments presented by writers on young people's conditions for use as a basis of observation.

Certainly young people are expressing their likes and dislikes in clearer and more definite terms than ever before. There seems to be no hesitation as they make known what they want and what they do not want. This definiteness may be due to the fact that young people are thinking harder and straighter to-day than in years gone by. They have developed an ability to go past the veneer of things and to probe into the vital parts of a subject. True, they do not have experience to help them in forming judgments, nor do they always look forward carefully before rendering opinions and making decisions, but at least they are thinking. From this point we might branch out on a number of separate discussions, but our chief concern is with what young people are asking for in religion.

Last summer, in some of our young people's conferences, delegates were asked to express in writing the things that they thought were most necessary and most desirable in their Sunday schools, their churches, and their young people's organizations. In some instances the frankness of the replies was startling. The evidence that young people are thinking clearly and sanely was unmistakable. And when the people of any group reach the point where they can state their wishes clearly and definitely, we are forced to ask ourselves the question, "Shall we give them what they want?"

In the realm of the Church and the Church service the majority of the young people called for a virile minister. Once or twice there was a request for a minister who could play with the young people and join them in their social activities. Most of the time, however, the request was for the type of minister who could think in terms of young people and who could interpret for them the teachings of Christianity in the light of modern events. Several young people asked for "messages suited to our need"; others asked for church services which they could understand and which would give them something to think about. This might mean an adaptation of the worship services so that the members of the congregation can really worship, using their hearts as well as their ears. One plea was for "something that I can take away with me, that will help me through the week."

Most of the requests had to do with the Sunday school. Here they asked for a superintendent who is "alive." This was interpreted by some to mean a superintendent with "intelligence," who thought not so much about what he would like to do, as about what the school needed to have done. Some said that they wished they could have a "superintendent who would not try to do everything himself," but who would organize the school and give others an opportunity to do the things for which they were especially qualified. An almost unanimous appeal was made for a definite place in the Sunday school for the young people. Sometimes this meant a separate Department for the young people where they could have their own superintendent, conduct their own worship services, preside at their own meetings, and carry on their own activities, which, of course, would be coordinated with the work of the whole school. If a separate Department is not available they would like to have more opportunity to participate in the regular services of the school. A large number of young people asked for better lessons. In some cases this meant lessons which were more interesting and more suited to their age and thinking, and in other instances it meant lessons better taught. Invariably a request was made for better music. In this connection it was interesting to note that the request was not always for "pep" in the music, for frequently the request was qualified by such expressions as "we want hymns that we can sing," or "we want hymns that mean something." Frequently the request was for better leadership at the piano or on the platform. Sometimes it meant a wider variety in the choice of hymns.

Some of the young people thought far enough to ask for more attractive rooms with better equipment in the way of chairs, tables, rugs, pictures, lighting, and so forth. One person gave as the chief request, "Better janitor service." Throughout the discussions connected with the expression of these desires there was a rather constant call for stronger and more courageous leadership. There was apparently a feeling that if better leadership were provided there would naturally be found better programs with more opportunity actually to do Christian work. It was interesting to note that the request for more socials, more opportunities to play, more extensive recreational equipment followed the request for things spiritual.

Again we come to the question, "Shall we give them what they want?" The answer to that question rests not only with the adults and with the leaders, but with the young people themselves. It is a wholesome indication that young people are thinking so directly and so helpfully about Christian work. Such thinking should be encouraged and in many cases it should be guided. Young people themselves should realize that the more they think about such matters, the greater will be their desire for better conditions, improved equipment, and more effective work. They should also realize that the

harder they ask for these improvements, the more likely they are to have their requests granted. Frequently the power to provide what is sought lies in the young people themselves. When the need for new equipment, new methods, or new leadership is fully realized as the result of their own thinking, there will be greater enthusiasm manifested and more energy spent in securing these things than when the task is suggested by some one outside the group. More respect is shown and greater care is taken of the things which have cost personal effort or sacrifice, and this is not a small asset.

Leaders should have confidence in the opinions of the young people and the young people should have confidence in themselves. The thoughts expressed in the conferences this summer prove that the younger generation of to-day can be concerned with the worth-while things of life. Perhaps they have not been accustomed to expressing themselves in these matters, but there is no reason why they cannot start now. The more evidence given of ability to think clearly and act wisely, the greater will be the willingness of the older leaders to recognize the younger workers in the church. Much can be accomplished if the young people will understand their own responsibility in seeking the things worth while and in proving that when these worth-while things are provided, they can make the proper use of the advantages put at their disposal.

DAYS FOR DECIDING SUMMER PLANS

BY WILLIAM RALPH HALL

"What are you going to do this summer?" or "Where are you going to go this summer?" Ten times a hundred thousand folks will ask one another these questions during the next two or three months. For those who like the mountains, there are great bill posters, beautifully printed booklets, and magazine articles by the score to help them to respond to the impulse and to let them know the vacation treasures of the mountains. For those who care for the sea and the lake, there is similar material to help them make the decision "where" for the vacation. But for the Christian leader to-day, the question of the summer plan is far larger than a choice of mountain or of water. The Summer Conferences, Training Schools for Christian Workers command consideration. The response to the call of these conferences has been such as to warrant a rapid growth in the number of conferences during recent years. Now there are comparatively few locations in the country out of reach of a conference of any kind. With the opportunity which these conferences offer, the Christian leader facing the summer asks, "What conference will make a part of my summer a real preparation for larger Christian service and at the same time provide the elements of a very wholesome vacation?" The inquirer is entitled to an answer to his question, "What does a summer conference provide?"

Naturally, in a Presbyterian Sunday-school Quarterly for young people, it is the Presbyterian Young People's summer conferences that should be discussed. What is there worth while in them? First, their central purpose is to get young people to understand more fully that Christian living and serving are the most important things in their lives. One who is in no way challenged by the sunsets of the mountains, by the call to climb to the summit, or by the exhilaration of the sweep of the mountain winds, should not include the mountains in his summer plans. One who is not definitely concerned with the building of the Kingdom, not challenged by the call to build a Christian character, nor by the opportunities to render Christian services, should not include a summer conference in his plans.

Second. The most conspicuous feature of a conference is its program of devotional meetings, study classes, discussion conferences, and inspirational addresses. These occupy the morning and part of the evening of each day. A number of different study classes are offered, providing those courses most needed in developing the young people for larger practical service in the church of which they are a part. The subjects include Bible, missions, the denomination, and many phases of work in Sunday school and other organizations.

Third. The conferences challenge the young people to test the principles of Christianity during the conference days by maintaining high Christian standards in all life's contacts, including both work and play. Therefore, wholesome fun, athletics, water sports, hiking, games, and so on occupy the chief place in the afternoons. A great camp fire, a series of games, a sing, or some other social feature, may come as an evening surprise. And in all these social gatherings high Christian standards are the goal. Christian fellowship among delegates and the finest of fellowship between delegates and leaders is a feature of conferences that must be experienced to be understood.

Fourth. The conferences seek to reach the young people who are now at work in the church or who give promise of leadership ability. The leaders of children's work in the church, the workers with teen-age boys and girls, and those who are leading groups of young people in any phase of church work, are desired as delegates. To this group of leaders should be added those young people not yet leaders but who give promise of effective leadership. Each person should be officially appointed by the church and instructed as to obligations to the church upon returning. It is recommended that the church and the organization sending the delegate unite in assuming one half or more of the expenses. It is usually wise to have each delegation pay some share of the expense involved.

Fifth. Those who teach in the conferences come from two sources. First, there are those who represent the different Boards of the Church, and, second, those who are in the local church work. All are interested in young people, capable of helping to equip them for larger service, and experienced in the special subjects they teach.

The conference leaders live their conference days with the young people and for young people. Some of those who have responded to the call of the mountain or of the sea and know their joys, have also shared summer conferences and have counted the treasures of the conference from the point of view of recreation unsurpassed, but finer than the good times of a week of Christian fellowship were the new inspiration, the enlarged equipment, and the higher purpose in life.

For the sake of helping forward the Church's advancing program and for your own Christian growth, will you put a summer conference in your summer plans? Write Headquarters for particulars.

A YOUNG PEOPLE'S READING CONTEST

BY JOHN BAILEY KELLY

Reading is always worth while, provided we read worth-while books. What books are more worth while than those which tell the story of the progress of God's Kingdom in the world? And what books are more interesting? It has been said that history is best written in the form of biography. Certainly the best missionary history has been written in this way. Rev. John G. Paton's life is a life of heroic pioneer adventure and conquest. The story of David Livingstone opens up the knowledge of an entire continent, as did Livingstone himself by his explorations. Marcus Whitman saved the Oregon country to the United States. Sheldon Jackson was largely responsible for the economic and intellectual development of Alaska.

Why not get this information into the minds and hearts of the young people through a reading contest, with a carefully selected list of books, credit being given for each book read according to the length of the book? The Mission Boards will be very glad to furnish lists of books for this purpose and should be consulted by the Missionary Committee. Almost without exception the public library will buy books of this nature and put them aside in a special alcove where they may be readily accessible. In one instance of which the writer knows the entire community was culled for missionary literature with the result that some two hundred and fifty volumes were gathered together and placed in the church for the time of the reading contest.

The young people usually divide into two groups in order that the element of contest may stimulate them in their efforts. Sometimes there are more than two contestants, the classes of the Sunday school or other organizations of young people entering the contest as groups and claiming credit for all points scored by their members. Or the whole number of young people may be divided into teams with captains and lieutenants. Any form of organization will do, so long as there is enthusiasm and pep.

INTERNATIONAL UNIFORM LESSONS

Lesson I **April 6, 1924**

THE KINGDOM RENT ASUNDER

**THE GOLDEN TEXT: "Pride goeth before destruction,
And a haughty spirit before a fall."
—Prov. 16: 18.**

TEXT OF LESSON, I Kings 12: 12-20.
For entire lesson, see I Kings 12: 1 to 16: 28

AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION

12 So Jer-o-bo'am and all the people came to Re-ho-bo'am the third day, as the king bade, saying, Come to me again the third day.

13 And the king answered the people roughly, and forsook the counsel of the old men which they had given him,

14 And spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke: my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.

15 So the king hearkened not unto the people; for it was a thing brought about of Je-ho'vah, that he might establish his word, which Je-ho'vah spake by A-hi'jah the Shi'lo-nite to Jer-o-bo'am the son of Ne'bat.

16 And when all Is'ra-el saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in Da'vid? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jes'se: to your tents, O Is'ra-el: now see to thine own house, David. So Is'ra-el departed unto their tents.

17 But as for the children of Is'ra-el that dwelt in the cities of Ju'dah, Re-ho-bo'am reigned over them.

18 Then king Re-ho-bo'am sent A-dor'am, who was over the men subject to task work; and all Is'ra-el stoned him to death with stones. And king Re-ho-bo'am made speed to get him up to his chariot, to flee to Je'ru-sa-lem.

19 So Is'ra-el rebelled against the house of Da'vid unto this day.

20 And it came to pass, when all Is'ra-el heard that Jer-o-bo'am was

AUTHORIZED VERSION

12 ¶ So Jer-o-bo'am and all the people came to Re-ho-bo'am the third day, as the king had appointed, saying, Come to me again the third day.

13 And the king answered the people roughly, and forsook the old men's counsel that they gave him;

14 And spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke: my father *also* chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.

15 Wherefore the king hearkened not unto the people; for the cause was from the LORD, that he might perform his saying, which the LORD spake by A-hi'jah the Shi'lo-nite unto Jer-o-bo'am the son of Ne'bat.

16 ¶ So when all Is'ra-el saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in Da'vid? neither *have we* inheritance in the son of Jes'se; to your tents, O Is'ra-el: now see to thine own house, Da'vid. So Is'ra-el departed unto their tents.

17 But *as for* the children of Is'ra-el which dwelt in the cities of Ju'dah, Re-ho-bo'am reigned over them.

18 Then king Re-ho-bo'am sent A-dor'am, who *was* over the tribute; and all Is'ra-el stoned him with stones, that he died. Therefore king Re-ho-bo'am made speed to get him up to his chariot, to flee to Je-ru'sa-lem.

19 So Is'ra-el rebelled against the house of Da'vid unto this day.

20 And it came to pass, when all Is'ra-el heard that Jer-o-bo'am was

returned, that they sent and called him unto the congregation, and made him king over all Is'ra-el: there was none that followed the house of Da'vid, but the tribe of Ju'dah only.

come again, that they sent and called him unto the congregation, and made him king over all Is'ra-el: there was none that followed the house of Da'vid, but the tribe of Ju'dah only.

DAILY HOME READINGS

M. March 31. A Cry for Justice. I Kings 12: 1-5.
T. April 1. The Kingdom Rent Asunder. I Kings 12: 12-20.
W. April 2. Politics Profaning Religion. I Kings 12: 25-33.
T. April 3. God's Judgment Predicted. I Kings 13: 1-6.
F. April 4. The Evil End of an Evil House. I Kings 15: 25-30.
S. April 5. The Terrors of Civil War. I Kings 16: 8-16.
S. April 6. The Beauty of Brotherhood. Psalm 133.

FACING THE CRISIS

Solomon died knowing that disaster would follow him. A French emperor, careless of what might happen to his country after he had passed away, gave expression to the words, "After me the deluge." We are not told what Solomon thought about the words which God had spoken to him, which told him clearly that after he had passed away the glory of the kingdom which had been his would pass away, but the message of God to Solomon was unmistakable. I Kings 11: 11-13.

Under Solomon the kingdom had been brought to its highest point of development. The nation under him had enjoyed a period of splendid commercial progress, and his fame had covered the earth. The glory of Israel had attracted the attention of foreign nations. Hiram, king of Tyre, had coöperated with Solomon in his magnificent architectural program. The Queen of Sheba had come from the South to visit Solomon, and was amazed at the grandeur of his court. During his reign the nation covered an area of sixty thousand square miles, a territory larger than it had previously occupied, or would ever occupy again.

To Think About: A Christian man who had lived a good life for threescore years and ten said that the greatest wish of his life "was to make a good finish." It is the finish that counts. Solomon made a poor finish. So did Napoleon. Paul made a glorious finish. He said, "I have finished the course, I have kept the faith."

THE CAUSE OF REBELLION

With the death of Solomon rebellion broke out. Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, went straightway to Shechem, the center of the northern part of the nation, to be acknowledged as king by the people of "all Israel." Rebellion and dissatisfaction had broken out among the people, headed by Jeroboam, a man of influence and ability. The people were in a bad mood, and demanded of Rehoboam certain reforms. Under the building projects and military advances of Solomon taxation had greatly increased. The court life of the

king had become extravagant and expensive, and the taxation imposed upon the people had become irksome and a burden.

At the same time forced labor had been resorted to in order to erect the buildings which Solomon had designed, and the people were weary of the social slavery into which the luxuriant court of Solomon had brought them. Under the leadership of Jeroboam the people made a request of the young king. It was made courteously and honestly. They asked that their burdens be lifted, and that life be made easier and more tolerable.

Rehoboam was weak and wavering. On consulting the old and experienced members of the court he was advised to accede to the request which the people of the North had made. Not satisfied with the advice of experience, he turned to the younger men, who advised him not to lighten, but to add to, the burdens of the people. After three days of conference he was ready with his answer. "My father," he said, "made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke: my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions."

The people were incensed, and immediately flung out the banner of revolt. They answered the king, saying, "What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David." Israel and Judah had always had their differences. They had never been completely united in thought and policy. Solomon's foreign alliances and his idolatry had weakened the hold of the Temple service, and the hardship endured by the people fomented discontent and rebellion.

To Think About: What was the cause of the revolution which introduced radicalism into Russia? It was undoubtedly the persecution and tyranny of the czar. It is true of a nation as of an individual that whatsoever we sow, we reap.

THE DIVIDED KINGDOM

Israel, at the close of the reign of Solomon, covered a territory of sixty thousand square miles. That is not a large territory. The State of Florida itself occupies an area of nearly sixty thousand square miles. When divided, the two nations, Israel and Judah, controlled little more than a fifth of what had been under the rule of Solomon.

The Kingdom of the North under Jeroboam covered a territory of ninety-four hundred square miles, and Judah under Rehoboam thirty-four hundred. This left a total area of over forty-seven thousand square miles, which, under the Divided Kingdom, was handed over to the enemies of Israel.

It seemed like a tragedy. It was a tragedy. We can imagine something like it in our own country. During the Civil War, when the North and the South fought through the battles of the War of

the Rebellion, the issue at stake was a united nation. It was a war between people of the same religion and the same nation.

So it was in Israel. The people of the North and of the South owed allegiance to the same God, the same laws, the same land, but the oppression of Solomon, with his extravagant and luxurious court, had brought about dissatisfaction and rebellion. Rehoboam tried to stem the tide, but this only added to the estrangement which had already taken place.

To Think About: A true king is the servant of the people. Rehoboam did not understand this. He thought that the people were given him to serve him, and this idea led to disaster. Jesus said, "Whosoever would be first among you, shall be servant of all."

THE KING OF JUDAH

Rehoboam, the new king of Judah, was the son of Solomon. He was a man of forty-one years of age when he became king, and he should have known better how to manage the national affairs. The advice which the old men of his court had given him was good. They said, "If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever."

The young men's advice to him, to impose still heavier burdens upon the people, was foolish and ended in tragedy. Rehoboam himself was wayward and weak. He was without definite moral principles. His mother was a heathen princess, and doubtless this had something to do with his training.

Under his rule, Jerusalem was despoiled and robbed of its treasures; the moral life of the people was undermined, and the glory of the nation departed. Of Rehoboam the record says, "And he did that which was evil, because he set not his heart to seek Jehovah." His life was a life of weakness, which brought disaster to the people whom he sought to guide.

To Think About: It is always good to take the advice of experience. It is based upon the knowledge of the ways of God in days gone by. The Word of God especially contains the record of the experience of men and is a lamp unto our feet, conveying light to our path.

THE KING OF ISRAEL

The new king of Israel was Jeroboam. He was a man of strong and dominant personality. We first hear of him under Solomon. He was an overseer of the workmen who were engaged in some of the building projects of the king.

One day the Prophet Ahijah came to him and in a dramatic manner rent his mantle and tore it into twelve pieces. He gave ten of the pieces to Jeroboam, saying, "Take thee ten pieces; for thus

saith Jehovah, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee."

It was a far-seeing prophecy, but endangered the life of Jeroboam, and, realizing his danger, he fled into Egypt until the death of Solomon. When Rehoboam was made king, Jeroboam returned and assumed the leadership of the popular revolt which had broken out in the North. The people denied their request, openly rebelled, and under Jeroboam set up a new nation in Israel. Henceforth Jeroboam was the king of Israel, and Rehoboam the king of Judah. The rebellion was a complete success, and every attempt to restore unity to the nation failed. As Jerusalem was the capital of Judah, so Shechem became the capital of Israel.

One of the first things Jeroboam did was to establish a place of worship in Israel. He said, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel." He set up two calves, symbols of Jehovah, one at Bethel, which was ten miles from Jerusalem, and one at Dan at the extreme north. These symbols at first represented Jehovah, but later their symbolic character was lost, and the people were led gradually but definitely into gross idolatry, which led finally to the overthrow of the nation.

To Think About: Jeroboam began wrong and ended wrong. Concerning him the Bible again and again says, "The sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, wherewith he made Israel to sin." Whatever his intentions were at the first, they brought disaster and ruin to the people.

PRACTICAL QUESTIONS

1. The punishment of the sins of parents is often reaped by their children.
2. The wisdom of experience is better than the adventure of youth.
3. Rehoboam had a heathen mother. Like mother, like son.
4. Oppression has always been the seed of liberty. Give examples.
5. Israel left God for golden calves.
6. Behind the rise and fall of nations are the sins of men and women. We need to pray:

"Lord God of hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget."

THE SHORTER CATECHISM

Q. 15. What was the sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created?

A. The sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created, was their eating the forbidden fruit.

ELIJAH AND THE STRUGGLE WITH BAAL

THE GOLDEN TEXT: "No man can serve two masters: . . . Ye cannot serve God and mammon."—Matt. 6: 24.

TEXT OF LESSON, I Kings 18: 20-24, 36-39.

For entire lesson, see I Kings 16: 29 to 19: 21; ch. 21; II Kings 1: 1 to 2: 12

AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION

20 So A'hab sent unto all the children of Is'ra-el, and gathered the prophets together unto mount Car'mel.

21 And E-li'jah came near unto all the people, and said, How long go ye limping between the two sides? if Je-ho'vah be God, follow him; but if Ba'al, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.

22 Then said E-li'jah unto the people, I, even I only, am left a prophet of Je-ho'vah; but Ba'al's prophets are four hundred and fifty men.

23 Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on the wood, and put no fire under; and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on the wood, and put no fire under.

24 And call ye on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of Je-ho'vah: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken.

* * * * *

36 And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the *evening* oblation, that E-li'jah the prophet came near, and said, O Je-ho'vah, the God of A'bra-ham, of Is'aac, and of Is'ra-el, let it be known this day that thou art God in Is'ra-el, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word.

37 Hear me, O Je-ho'vah, hear me, that this people may know that thou, Je-ho'vah, art God, and *that* thou hast turned their heart back again.

38 Then the fire of Je-ho'vah fell, and consumed the burnt-offering, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.

AUTHORIZED VERSION

20 So A'hab sent unto all the children of Is'ra-el, and gathered the prophets together unto mount Car'mel.

21 And E-li'jah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD *be* God, follow him: but if Ba'al, *then* follow him. And the people answered him not a word.

22 Then said E-li'jah unto the people, I, *even* I only, remain a prophet of the LORD; but Ba'al's prophets *are* four hundred and fifty men.

23 Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay *it* on wood, and put no fire *under:* and I will dress the other bullock, and lay *it* on wood, and put no fire *under:*

24 And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken.

* * * * *

36 And it came to pass at *the time of* the offering of the *evening* sacrifice, that E-li'jah the prophet came near, and said, LORD God of A'bra-ham, I'saac, and of Is'ra-el, let it be known this day that thou *art* God in Is'ra-el, and *that* I *am* thy servant, and *that* I have done all these things at thy word.

37 Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou *art* the LORD God, and *that* thou hast turned their heart back again.

38 Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that *was* in the trench.

39 And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, Je-ho'vah, he is God; Je-ho'-vah, he is God.

39 And when all the people saw *it*, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he *is* the God; the LORD, he *is* the God.

DAILY HOME READINGS

M. April 7. God Nurtures a New Leader. I Kings 17: 1-6.
T. April 8. A Widow's Charity and Recompense. I Kings 17: 7-16.
W. April 9. The "Troubler of Israel." I Kings 18: 17-24.
T. April 10. The Victory Over Baal. I Kings 18: 36-39.
F. April 11. "A Still Small Voice." I Kings 19: 9-16.
S. April 12. The Translation of Elijah. II Kings 2: 1-11.
S. April 13. A Citizen of the Kingdom. Psalm 15.

AHAB THE KING

We are introduced in this lesson to one of the strongest kings of Israel, the Northern Kingdom. Jeroboam, the first king of Israel, reigned with a strong hand for twenty-two years. He was strong and forceful, although he was disloyal to God and encouraged idolatry.

The kings who followed him were Nadab, Baasha, Elah, Zimri, and Omri. These kings followed the example of Jeroboam in their idolatry. One of them, Zimri, reigned only seven days. After Omri came Ahab, who ruled Israel for twenty-two years. He was a vigorous and forceful ruler, but it was said of him that he "did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah above all that were before him."

His wife Jezebel was a woman of cruel and immoral character, but strong and capable. She has been called the "Lady Macbeth of the Old Testament." She was a heathen princess, and introduced into Israel the worship of Baal, and persecuted the priests and worshipers of Jehovah. Of Jezebel it has been said: "Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal, the king of Sidon and high priest of Astarte, with all the stern, fierce fanaticism of her blood, ruled over both Ahab and his kingdom of Israel. The subtle queen had her hundreds of priests at her beck and call. The splendid ritual of Baal—enforced by the example and patronage of her court, made fascinating to the mob by every trapping of magnificence, performed by a priesthood whose influence was unbounded, backed by all the despotic power of the fashion of Tyre and Sidon—at last triumphed everywhere. A temple and an altar to Baal, as well as an Asherah pole, were erected in Samaria."

To Think About: Both Ahab and Jezebel were strong and capable though they were wicked and idolatrous. Wickedness is not necessarily weak. Physical power is often on the side of evil.

ELIJAH THE PROPHET

Ahab and Jezebel were not allowed to go on their way unopposed. Like a man out of the night Elijah stood before them with the word

of God on his lips. He came, as John the Baptist came, out of the wilderness, a strange, lonely man, speaking with authority because God was with him. We know little or nothing of his early life. He is introduced to us as Elijah the Tishbite. He enjoyed solitude, but was filled with a passion for God and for righteousness, and he is known in the Bible as a man of prayer.

He came from the presence of God into the presence of the king. He came with words of rebuke and punishment, and announced to Ahab that because of his wickedness famine should fall upon the land and continue for three years and six months. Having announced his mandate he disappeared as suddenly as he had come, and hid by the brook Cherith where he was fed miraculously by the ravens.

From thence he departed, for the brook dried up because of the drought, and found his way across the country to the borders of Phœnicia, where he was fed by the widow whose meal had almost been exhausted. He came and went like an apparition, a great moral hero. Dr. W. Robertson Smith says: "The work of Elijah was not so much that of a great teacher as that of a great hero. He did not preach any new doctrine about Jehovah, but at a critical moment he saw what loyalty to the cause of Jehovah demanded, and of that cause he became the champion, not by mere words, but by his life."

To Think About: The religious crisis of the nation brought forth Elijah, the outstanding hero of his time. This has frequently happened. The Dark Ages of Europe brought forth Martin Luther, and the early corruption of the Church gave the world Savonarola. Elijah is a man of deeds rather than of words. "He is to be valued not for what he said, but for what he did."

THE CHALLENGE

The famine having brought the people as well as the king face to face with disaster, and face to face with the moral judgments of Jehovah, Elijah suddenly appeared again before King Ahab. First he came to Obadiah, the prophet of Jehovah, who, fearful lest Elijah would again disappear while he made known his presence to the king, hesitated to announce his arrival. Elijah had a strange way of coming and going.

When Ahab the king saw the prophet, he exclaimed, "Is it thou, thou troubler of Israel?" Elijah replied, "I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of Jehovah." Conscious that Elijah was speaking the truth and that he had the power of God behind him, Ahab was silent. Humbled and afraid he was ready for the proposal which the prophet of God made. He challenged Ahab to go to Mount Carmel, and there to test the supremacy of God and Baal. Elijah

proposed that the question of the supremacy of Jehovah be settled for all time.

To Think About: Elijah stood alone against the whole nation. He had right on his side, and according to the old saying, "One with God makes a majority."

THE CONTESTANTS

The test which Elijah proposed was very simple. On one side was Elijah the prophet of Jehovah, on the other the four hundred and fifty priests and prophets of Baal and the four hundred priests and prophets of Asherah, the heathen goddess who shared divine worship with Baal. Surrounding the altars on which the sacrifices were to be offered was the great audience, a multitude of people who watched with interest this hero in the midst of his enemies.

Elijah had proposed a test or trial by fire. The priests of Baal were to prepare the sacrifice and to call upon their god to send fire from heaven to consume it. This they proposed to do. Elijah demanded decision and choice. He said, "How long go ye limping between the two sides? if Jehovah be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him." Elijah told them that it was impossible for them to go on wavering between Baal and Jehovah. It was the command Jesus made to his followers when he said, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

To Think About: God will not take second place. He requires that we worship him with all our soul, with all our might, with all our strength, with all our mind. He will not share his worship. He is a jealous God. What did the Romans attempt to do when they built the Pantheon?

FALSE PROPHETS

The people were well pleased with Elijah's proposal. "It is well spoken," they said. It was perfectly fair, and the priests of Baal could not avoid the issue. They were to prepare their sacrifice first, and, having prepared it and made it ready for the fire, they called upon their god to send the divine flame. From morning until noon they cried, "O Baal, hear us," but no fire came, and as the hours passed by the priests became hysterical and distracted. They danced around the altar, cutting themselves with stones, until the evening sacrifice, but there was no voice nor any sign from their god.

The people began to doubt the priests' power, and Elijah cast ridicule upon them, saying, "Cry aloud; for he is a god: either he is musing, or he is gone aside, or he is on a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth and must be awaked." A sense of helplessness fell upon the priests, and at the evening hour of sacrifice they confessed their failure.

To Think About: False religion should excite our pity, not our scorn. Its worshipers are deceived and betrayed. The true missionary is he who does not ridicule the faiths of others, but who leads worshipers out of darkness into the light.

THE CONSUMING FIRE

The evening sacrifice had long been neglected by the people, and when the appointed hour drew near, Elijah took twelve stones, representing the twelve tribes of Israel, and repaired the altar of Jehovah which had been neglected and broken down. He prepared the oxen for sacrifice, and poured four jars of water three times upon the sacrifice until the trench around the altar was filled. His purpose was to show that there was no chance of deception, and that, if fire came, it would come not from beneath, but from above.

Then Elijah drew near, and offered up his prayer. It was a simple and direct prayer. Immediately the fire fell, and sacrifice, altar, stones, water, and dust were consumed. The people fell upon their faces and exclaimed, "Jehovah, he is God; Jehovah, he is God."

To Think About: In the Epistle of James in the New Testament Elijah is called a "man of prayer." It is prayer that distinguishes him. Prayer is power, for prayer releases power in all men of God.

THE TRIUMPH OF TRUTH

Falsehood and idolatry were for the time silenced. The people confessed to the supremacy of Jehovah, and Elijah, indignant at the havoc which the priests of Baal had wrought in the land, slew them. Those were dark and revengeful days, but we must remember that these prophets were not only priests of a false god, but that they were traitors to their own country and had led their nation down the path of ruin. Treachery to-day is still punished with death.

To Think About:

"Truth crushed to earth shall rise again,
The eternal years of God are hers;
But Error, wounded, writhes with pain,
And dies among his worshipers."

FOR THOUGHT AND PRAYER

1. There is no neutral ground in religion. If God be God it is our duty to give him the full allegiance of our life.
2. We are called upon to take sides. We must choose. Not to choose is to choose.
3. The power of one good man cannot be estimated.
4. Prayer links us to the power of God. Idolatry and disobedience to God are both rebellion against God and treason to one's country.

THE SHORTER CATECHISM

Q. 16. Did all mankind fall in Adam's first transgression?

A. The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself, but for his posterity, all mankind, descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him, in his first transgression.

EASTER LESSON—THE RISEN CHRIST

THE GOLDEN TEXT: "But now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of them that are asleep."—I Cor. 15: 20.

TEXT OF LESSON, Mark 16: 1-15

American Standard Version

1 And when the sabbath was past, Ma'ry Mag-da-le'ne, and Mary the *mother* of James, and Sa-lo'me, bought spices, that they might come and anoint him.

2 And very early on the first day of the week, they come to the tomb when the sun was risen.

3 And they were saying among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the tomb?

4 And looking up, they see that the stone is rolled back: for it was exceeding great.

5 And entering into the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, arrayed in a white robe; and they were amazed.

6 And he saith unto them, Be not amazed: ye seek Je'sus, the Naz-a-rene', who hath been crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold, the place where they laid him!

7 But go, tell his disciples and Pe'ter, He goeth before you into Gal'i-lee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.

8 And they went out, and fled from the tomb; for trembling and astonishment had come upon them: and they said nothing to any one; for they were afraid.

9 Now when he was risen early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Ma'ry Mag-da-le'ne, from whom he had cast out seven demons.

10 She went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept.

11 And they, when they heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, disbelieved.

12 And after these things he was manifested in another form unto two of them, as they walked, on their way into the country.

13 And they went away and told it unto the rest: neither believed they them.

Authorized Version

1 And when the sabbath was past, Ma'ry Mag-da-le'ne, and Ma'ry the *mother* of James, and Sa-lo'me, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him.

2 And very early in the morning the first *day* of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.

3 And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?

4 And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great.

5 And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted.

6 And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Je'sus of Naz'-a-reth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him.

7 But go your way, tell his disciples and Pe'ter that he goeth before you into Gal'i-lee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.

8 And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any *man;* for they were afraid.

9 ¶ Now when *Je'sus* was risen early the first *day* of the week, he appeared first to Ma'ry Mag-da-le'ne, out of whom he had cast seven devils.

10 *And* she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept.

11 And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not.

12 ¶ After that he appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country.

13 And they went and told *it*

14 And afterward he was manifested unto the eleven themselves as they sat at meat; and he upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them that had seen him after he was risen.

15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation.

unto the residue: neither believed they them.

14 ¶ Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.

15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

DAILY HOME READINGS

M. April 14. The Empty Tomb. Mark 16: 1-8.
T. April 15. Revelations of the Risen Christ. Mark 16: 9-15.
W. April 16. Rising with Christ. II Cor. 5: 15-21.
T. April 17. "The Power of His Resurrection." Phil. 3: 8-14.
F. April 18. The Exaltation of Christ. Eph. 1: 15-23.
S. April 19. The Ever-Present Love of Christ. Rom. 8: 31-39.
S. April 20. Our Deliverer from Death. Ps. 16: 5-11.

THE EASTER MESSAGE

We turn aside from the study of Hebrew history to think of the central message of Christianity, and the supreme fact of history—the resurrection of Christ from the dead. This is the greatest miracle in the New Testament, and is the final and convincing proof that Jesus Christ is indeed the Son of God, the Saviour of the world. The lesson is taken from the Gospel According to Mark, which is the shortest of the four Gospels, and is generally considered to be the oldest record we have of the life of our Lord.

You will notice in the Revised Version that the story is broken at v. 8, and then in the margin you read the words: "The two oldest Greek manuscripts, and some other authorities, omit from v. 9 to the end. Some other authorities have a different ending to the Gospel." Dr. George Milligan in his very interesting and recent book, "Here and There Among the Papyri," in speaking of the closing verses of Mark's Gospel says:

"In a papyrus roll the opening and closing leaves would naturally be those most handled, and consequently those most likely to be mutilated or broken off. Is it possible that we have here an explanation of a well-known difficulty in connection with the closing chapter of Mark's Gospel? In that chapter, as you will see from the marginal note in the Revised Version, vs. 9-20 are wanting in our two principal Greek manuscripts, the Gospel in them ending with the last words of v. 8, 'for they were afraid.' That this was the original ending of the Gospel is, on various grounds into which we need not enter at present, most unlikely. And it is at least a happy conjecture that in an early copy (the only one for the time being in circulation) the last leaf had been lost, and that consequently in copies made from it the Gospel came to the same abrupt ending."

To Think About: The New Testament completes the Old Testament. The Gospel message perfects and fulfills the message contained in the Old Testament. Not Elijah or Elisha, but Jesus, perfectly reveals God.

THE MINISTRY OF LOVE

Jesus had been crucified on Friday. At three o'clock in the afternoon after the great darkness had covered the earth he had yielded up his spirit to God. The Jewish Sabbath began at sunset, and according to the Jewish law it was necessary to remove the bodies from the crosses, and hurried preparations were made for the burial of Jesus.

We are not told what became of the bodies of the thieves that were crucified with him, but the body of Jesus was laid away in the tomb of Joseph near by the place where he had been crucified. The burial had been hurriedly carried through, and the last acts of love had not been performed; during the day of rest the women who had watched at the cross waited until the Sabbath passed, that they might finish the embalming of the body of him whom they had called Lord.

Early in the morning on Sunday, the day after the Jewish Sabbath, these devoted women who had been last at the cross came with their spices that they might anoint the body. Mark gives us their names: Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome. They who had been last at the cross were earliest at the tomb. Dr. Stalker in his "Trial and Death of Jesus Christ," says:

"In ancient times it was considered one of the worst of misfortunes to miss decent burial; and, although this sentiment was mixed with superstition, there was beneath it a healthy instinct. There is a dignity of the body as well as of the soul, especially when it is a temple of the Holy Ghost; and there is a majesty about death which cannot be ignored without loss to the living. It is with a sense of pain and humiliation, as if a dishonor were being done to human nature, that we see a funeral at which everything betokens hurry, shabbiness, and slovenliness."

The place where Jesus was buried was near by Jerusalem, and to-day the Church of the Holy Sepulcher is supposed to include both the Lord's tomb and the hole in the rock in which the cross was placed. The two are only thirty yards apart. We are not able now to identify these places with absolute accuracy, but certainly the most sacred piece of land in the world is situated where the Church of the Holy Sepulcher now stands.

To Think About: Dr. Stalker says, "The hands of Joseph and Nicodemus met and clasped each other around the body of their Redeemer." There is no love or fellowship like that of those who are united to one another through their connection with him. Consider the different types of people who find themselves one in their love for Jesus Christ.

HUMAN HELPLESSNESS

How helpless we are when death comes! We are anxious to do all that can be done, and yet there is little that human hands can do. The heart is comforted in little acts of kindness and of love, and these devoted women passing through the silent streets early in the morning before anyone was stirring, came with their spices to anoint the body of Jesus. They had planned and purposed and prepared everything. They knew nothing of the resurrection, and their faith and hope had been buried in Joseph's tomb with Jesus.

Their anxiety was all about the great stone which separated them from the dead body of their Lord. No difficulties, no hindrances, no obstacles could stand in the way of their love. Little did they think that at this very time Jesus was alive and that the Easter morning had awakened with resurrection glory.

To Think About: "This is a place of mystery, where dim yet imposing meanings peep out on us in whatever direction we turn. We have called the scene, the dead Christ. But who does not see that the dead Christ is so interesting and wonderful because he is also the living Christ? He lives; he is here; he is with us now. Yet the converse is also true—that the living Christ is to us so wonderful and adorable because he was dead. The fact that he is alive inspires us with strength and hope; but it is by the memory of his death that he is commended to the trust of our burdened consciences and the love of our sympathetic hearts."

HE IS RISEN

When the women approached the tomb they were surprised and amazed to find that the stone which sealed it had been rolled away, and that the tomb was open. Their first thought, of course, was a thought of fear. They would quickly come to the conclusion that vandals or enemies had stolen the body of Jesus, and their grief was deepened. They had come to the tomb expecting that their only difficulty would be to roll back the stone. The record tells us that the stone was "exceeding great." This difficulty, however, was removed, and without interpreting its meaning, and apparently fearless even at that early hour when no one was stirring, they entered the tomb, and instead of seeing the dead body of Jesus came face to face with "a young man sitting on the right side," arrayed in a white robe. Amazement silenced them, but the young man, the angel, immediately said, "Be not amazed: ye seek Jesus, the Nazarene, who hath been crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold, the place where they laid him!"

This was the message of the Easter morning. It was not a message of death, but of life. Their spices were unnecessary, for he whom they had thought dead was now alive. When we realize this fact we have come into possession of the gospel.

To Think About: Dr. James Denny has said that "no apostle, no New Testament writer ever remembered Christ." By this he means that the disciples did not think of Jesus as belonging to the past, and did not mourn for him as for one lost, but believed that he was still their living Lord, and that he was with them as in the days of his flesh.

THE EASTER MESSAGE

The Easter message is a command. The angel commanded the women to go and announce to the disciples, and especially to Peter, that Jesus had gone into Galilee, and that they would see him there. Stricken with fear and astonishment they fled from the tomb and we are told "they said nothing to anyone; for they were afraid."

It is the Easter message which gives the missionary gospel. We are commanded to proclaim to all men the fact that Christ is risen, and often, like the astonished women, we say nothing, and our fear silences our testimony. There was a very suggestive custom in the old Russian Church, to this effect, that early on Easter morning worshipers passing through the streets to the place of prayer would greet one another with the words, "The Lord is risen," to which there came the immediate response, "The Lord is risen indeed."

Paul tells us that if Christ is not risen from the dead, then all our religion, our hope, our preaching are vain. It is the gospel of the resurrection that brings the joy and the hope into life, and it is the Easter message which turns our sorrow into peace. Before the resurrection of our Lord, death was a symbol of darkness, and on a Roman tomb was found this inscription: "Reader, enjoy thy life, for after death there is no life . . . nor any kind of enjoyment. Mix the goblet of wine and drink. . . ." "Traveler, stay, listen and learn . . . Once dead, we are all alike." But, the message of the gospel proclaims the fact that because Christ lives, we shall live, also.

To Think About: Can you interpret this parable? "In my dream I found myself in a dark valley. Only on the distant hills a light was breaking, and I saw far off the gates of the City of God. I felt within me a longing to be there, for I was sure that was my soul's true home. But I could not take even a single step, for my feet were chained. Men passed me now and then, to whom I cried for help. Some bade me try to shake the fetters off; some told me that the fetters were imaginary. Some pitied me; some scolded me; some jeered at me; some tried to make the fetters easier; but none could set me free. And then came One upon whose kindly face were marks of suffering, and on the hand held out to me I saw a scar. Hope stirred my heart, and in my eagerness to clasp that hand I struggled forward and fell on my knees before him. 'My son,' he said, 'I have borne thy sins, and they are all forgiven. Arise and follow me.' And I arose and followed him."

THE GREAT COMMISSION

The resurrection of Jesus from the dead was the beginning of the missionary message. The scattered disciples who had lost hope after the crucifixion were brought together by their fellowship with the risen Christ. For forty days, Jesus continued to show himself to the disciples, and at last ascended into heaven, committing to them the proclamation of the gospel throughout all the world, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation."

To Think About: There is a story which tells that Thomas, after our Lord's ascension, became troubled with his doubts again. He went first to one and then to the other, but no one had time to listen to his doubts. They were busy with their work. At last it came to him that perhaps it was because they were so busy that they were free from doubts. Immediately he went off on a missionary journey, and in his service for his Master his doubts left him. Those who obey Christ realize his presence.

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

1. Did the disciples expect Jesus to rise from the dead?
2. What proofs have we of the resurrection of Christ from the dead?
3. Why is the resurrection the central message of the gospel?
4. How often did Jesus show himself to his disciples after the resurrection?
5. What great resurrection chapter is found in the Bible?
6. Name some of the great Easter hymns. Which of them do you like best?

THE SHORTER CATECHISM

Q. 17. Into what estate did the fall bring mankind?
A. The fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery.

AMOS AND HOSEA PLEADING FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS

(Temperance Lesson)

THE GOLDEN TEXT: "Hate the evil, and love the good."—Amos 5: 15.

TEXT OF LESSON, Amos 6: 1-6; Hos. 6: 1-6.

For entire lesson, see The Books of Amos and Hosea

American Standard Version

Amos 6: 1 Woe to them that are at ease in Zi'on, and to them that are secure in the mountain of Sa-ma'ri-a, the notable men of the chief of the nations, to whom the house of Is'ra-el come!

2 Pass ye unto Cal'neh, and see; and from thence go ye to Ha'math the great; then go down to Gath of the Phi-lis'tines: are they better than these kingdoms? or is their border greater than your border?

3 —ye that put far away the evil day, and cause the seat of violence to come near;

4 That lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall;

5 That sing idle songs to the sound of the viol; that invent for themselves instruments of music, like Da'vid;

6 That drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief oils; but they are not grieved for the affliction of Jo'seph.

* * * * *

Hos. 6: 1 Come, and let us return unto Je-ho'vah; for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up.

2 After two days will he revive us: on the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live before him.

3 And let us know, let us follow on to know Je-ho'vah: his going forth is sure as the morning; and he will come unto us as the rain, as the latter rain that watereth the earth.

4 O E'phra-im, what shall I do unto thee? O Ju'dah, what shall I do unto thee? for your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the dew that goeth early away.

5 Therefore have I hewed them by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of my mouth: and thy

Authorized Version

Amos 6: 1 Woe to them *that are* at ease in Zi'on, and trust in the mountain of Sa-ma'ri-a, *which are* named chief of the nations, to whom the house of Is'ra-el came!

2 Pass ye unto Cal'neh, and see; and from thence go ye to Ha'math the great: then go down to Gath of the Phil-is'tines: *be they* better than these kingdoms? or their border greater than your border?

3 Ye that put far away the evil day, and cause the seat of violence to come near;

4 That lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall;

5 That chant to the sound of the viol, *and* invent to themselves instruments of musick, like Da'vid;

6 That drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments: but they are not grieved for the affliction of Jo'seph.

* * * * *

Hos. 6: 1 Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up.

2 After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight.

3 Then shall we know, *if* we follow on to know the Lord: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter *and* former rain unto the earth.

4 ¶ O E'phra-im, what shall I do unto thee? O Ju'dah, what shall I do unto thee? for your goodness *is* as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away.

5 Therefore have I hewed *them* by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of my mouth: and thy

judgments are *as* the light that goeth forth.

6 For I desire goodness, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings.

judgments *are as* the light *that* goeth forth.

6 For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.

DAILY HOME READINGS

M. April 21. Putting Away the Evil Day. Amos 6: 1-6.
T. April 22. Jehovah Pleading for Righteousness. Amos 5: 10-17.
W. April 23. Destructive Ignorance. Hos. 4: 6-10.
T. April 24. The Saving Knowledge of God. Hos. 6: 1-6.
F. April 25. Israel's Sowing and Reaping. Hos. 10: 9-15.
S. April 26. The Bands of His Love. Hos. 11: 1-9.
S. April 27. Repentance and God's Favor. Isa. 55: 6-13.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

This lesson continues the study of the history of Israel, the Northern Kingdom. After the division of the kingdom Jeroboam became the first king of Israel, and Rehoboam the first king of Judah. The kingdom of Israel lasted for two hundred and nine years, and had many kings. The names of the kings following Jeroboam were: Nadab, Baasha, Elah, Zimri, Omri, Ahab, Ahaziah, Jehoram, Jehu, Jehoahaz, Jehoash, Jeroboam II, Zechariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah, Pekah, and Hoshea.

During this period idolatry became worse and worse, and the power of the great empire of Assyria began to develop and encroach upon the territory of Israel. After the death of Jehu, Israel paid tribute to Assyria, and in 722 B. C. was conquered and destroyed by Sargon, the Assyrian emperor.

Hosea and Amos, the prophets concerning whom we study in our lesson, lived and prophesied toward the end of this history. Their work began during the closing years of King Jeroboam II (first half of the eighth century B. C.), and was continued under his successor. It was a period of national decline, and ended in disaster.

To Think About: Apply the thought of this familiar stanza to the historical events which are revealed in this history:

"Crowns and thrones may perish,
Kingdoms rise and wane,
But the Church of Jesus
Constant will remain;
Gates of hell can never
'Gainst that Church prevail;
We have Christ's own promise,
And that cannot fail."

THE WORK OF THE PROPHET

There is no other nation that has had such a glorious succession of prophets as has Israel. Other nations have had kings and emperors and scholars and statesmen, but the glory of the Hebrew people is to be found in her prophets. Think for a moment of the influence and

familiarity of Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. The kings with their wars and statecraft pass away, but the messages of the prophets remain, and influence our day and generation.

To Think About: The Shorter Catechism in answering the question, "How doth Christ execute the office of a prophet?" says, "Christ executeth the office of a prophet, in revealing to us, by his Word and Spirit, the will of God for our salvation." Try to understand the meaning of these words.

THE PROPHET AMOS

Amos was the first of the great prophets whose messages to the nation were reduced to writing. He was born not in Israel, but in Judah. His parents were obscure people, and he himself began life in a humble way. He possessed a few sycomore trees which bore fruit and a small flock of sheep of a special breed, ugly and short footed, but producing an excellent quality of wool. These sheep he pastured in the neighborhood of Tekoa, near Jerusalem.

The Kingdom of Israel under Jeroboam II prospered, and was victorious in war, and among the people of wealth, luxury and intemperance increased. With the growing luxury of the rich, the poor were burdened with taxes. Amos knew these conditions, and his soul was on fire. God called him to deliver his message, and although, like Moses, he hesitated, at last he assented, and went forth to deliver the message which God had given him. He said, "I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was a herdsman, and a dresser of sycomore-trees: and Jehovah took me from following the flock, and Jehovah said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel."

It was a bold mission to which Amos was called, but he did not waver. He began his mission at Bethel, the headquarters of the idolatry and the calf worship of Israel. The priests bade him cease, and ordered him to return to his own home. Amos refused, and uttered his condemnation against the people in a series of visions contained in the book which now bears his name.

To Think About: The first verse of the lesson condemned those who were "at ease." It is a dangerous policy to let well enough alone. What would have happened if Jesus had let well enough alone? Every missionary, every doctor, every preacher, every true Christian wants to make things better. Things are not well when lawlessness and intemperance and crime and ignorance abound in the world.

A CRY FOR JUSTICE

Dr. MacFadyen calls The Book of Amos a "cry for justice." If you read the verses printed in our lesson taken from his prophecy you will see why the prophecy which Amos uttered is called a "cry for justice." He was against all forms of social injustice and oppression. The charges brought against the leaders of the people are startling.

Suppose we gather up these charges as outlined in the lesson text:

(1) They were careless, and at ease. (V. 1.)

(2) They were idle, indolent, refusing to work, lying upon couches of ivory. (V. 4.)

(3) They were lovers of luxury, careless of the fact that the great mass of the people were enduring poverty and oppression. (V. 4.)

(4) They were lacking in culture, and preferred things that were vulgar. They sang idle songs, perhaps something akin to our modern jazz. (V. 5.)

(5) They were intemperate. Amos outlines a terrible state of affairs in relation to drink. (V. 6.)

(6) They were hard-hearted. They cared nothing about those who suffered, as long as they themselves could be supplied with dainties and luxury, and could live their easy, indolent life. (V. 6.)

It is a terrible indictment of a nation that was willing to permit such terrible contrasts to exist. The same indictment may be brought against our civilization, that allows a boulevard and a slum to exist side by side in our modern cities.

To Think About: The gospel of Christ makes love to God and love to our neighbor parts of the same commandment. Memorize these verses:

"Where cross the crowded ways of life,
Where sound the cries of race and clan,
Above the noise of selfish strife,
We hear thy voice, O Son of Man.

"In haunts of wretchedness and need,
On shadowed thresholds dark with fears,
From paths where hide the lures of greed,
We catch the vision of thy tears.

. . . . . .

"The cup of water given for thee
Still holds the freshness of thy grace;
Yet long these multitudes to see
The sweet compassion of thy face."

THE PROPHET HOSEA

We turn from Amos to Hosea. Hosea was living at the same time as Amos. He was younger, and his message is altogether different from that of Amos. Hosea was born in the north. His sympathy was with Israel, and in his book he is introduced to us as a man of great feeling and deep affection.

His own home life became a parable, and he used it to illustrate his message. In early life he had married a woman named Gomer who had proved faithless to him. He had made many fruitless attempts to reclaim her. Three children had been born in their home, and then she deserted both her husband and them. Hosea, however, still loved her, and did everything to win her back to a life of love and purity. This story he turned into a parable. His faithless wife was like Israel, whom God had tried to reclaim and redeem.

To Think About: Hosea was a man of deep feeling and deep piety, and at the same time he was a true poet. Some of his words have become familiar proverbs. "Like people, like priest." "They sow the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind." Read Hos., ch. 11, to understand his character.

THE GOD OF LOVE

If the message of Amos is a cry for justice, the message of Hosea is an appeal of love. His prophecies are full of gentle love, sympathy, and tender compassion. Israel is like a child. God is like a father. (See ch. 11). Israel had been wayward, and a prodigal, and God in his fatherly love has gone out following his wandering child, and pleading with him to return.

In the verses of the lesson Israel is likened to a penitent, and God to a happy redeemer. The danger was at the door. It was a moral and political danger. Idolatry and immorality were abroad in the land. The shrines and sanctuaries of Israel were scenes of wickedness and immorality. The nation had gone into the far country. God was waiting for the return, and although Israel seemed ready to repent, yet the prophet knew that her repentance was superficial, and that it would be like the early cloud that fades with the morning sun, and like the early dew that disappears. The nation seemed in a gracious mood, and yet this was only superficial. Israel's sin remained, and no superficial repentance could ward off disaster.

To Think About: There can be no true forgiveness without true penitence. God is always ready to forgive. The problem of religion is not to find a forgiving God but to find a penitent heart.

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

1. Do we have anyone to-day corresponding to the Hebrew prophet?
2. Why is the message of Amos called a "cry for justice"?
3. Compare the character and message of Hosea with the character and message of Amos.
4. What was the political and moral condition of Israel during the time of Hosea and Amos?
5. Do kings or prophets, politicians or preachers, have the greatest influence upon the life of a nation?
6. Name the outstanding prophets of the Hebrew nation.

THE SHORTER CATECHISM

Q. 18. Wherein consists the sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell?

A. The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell, consists in, the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called original sin; together with all actual trangressions which proceed from it.

THE ASSYRIAN EXILE OF ISRAEL

THE GOLDEN TEXT: "I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word."
—Ps. 119: 16.

TEXT OF LESSON, II Kings 17: 9-18.

For entire lesson, see II Kings, chs. 11 to 17

AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION

9 And the children of Is'ra-el did secretly things that were not right against Je-ho'vah their God: and they built them high places in all their cities, from the tower of the watchmen to the fortified city;

10 And they set them up pillars and A-she'rim upon every high hill, and under every green tree;

11 And there they burnt incense in all the high places, as did the nations whom Je-ho'vah carried away before them; and they wrought wicked things to provoke Je-ho'vah to anger;

12 And they served idols, whereof Je-ho'vah had said unto them, Ye shall not do this thing.

13 Yet Je-ho'vah testified unto Is'ra-el, and unto Ju'dah, by every prophet, and every seer, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets.

14 Notwithstanding they would not hear, but hardened their neck, like to the neck of their fathers, who believed not in Je-ho'vah their God.

15 And they rejected his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their fathers, and his testimonies which he testified unto them; and they followed vanity, and became vain, and *went* after the nations that were round about them, concerning whom Je-ho'vah had charged them that they should not do like them.

16 And they forsook all the commandments of Je-ho'vah their God, and made them molten images, even two calves, and made an A-she'rah, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served Ba'al.

17 And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through

AUTHORIZED VERSION

9 And the children of Is'ra-el did secretly *those* things that *were* not right against the LORD their God, and they built them high places in all their cities, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city.

10 And they set them up images and groves in every high hill, and under every green tree:

11 And there they burnt incense in all the high places, as *did* the heathen whom the LORD carried away before them; and wrought wicked things to provoke the LORD to anger:

12 For they served idols, whereof the LORD had said unto them, Ye shall not do this thing.

13 Yet the LORD testified against Is'ra-el, and against Ju'dah, by all the prophets, *and by* all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments *and* my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets.

14 Notwithstanding they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the LORD their God.

15 And they rejected his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their fathers, and his testimonies which he testified against them; and they followed vanity, and became vain, and went after the heathen that *were* round about them, *concerning* whom the LORD had charged them, that they should not do like them.

16 And they left all the commandments of the LORD their God, and made them molten images, *even* two calves, and made a grove, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served Ba'al.

17 And they caused their sons

the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do that which was evil in the sight of Je-ho'vah, to provoke him to anger.

18 Therefore Je-ho'vah was very angry with Is'ra-el, and removed them out of his sight: there was none left but the tribe of Ju'dah only.

and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.

18 Therefore the LORD was very angry with Is'ra-el, and removed them out of his sight: there was none left but the tribe of Ju'dah only.

DAILY HOME READINGS

M. April 28. The Assyrian Exile of Israel. II Kings 17: 6-12.
T. April 29. Israel's Doom Foretold. Amos 4: 6-13.
W. April 30. The Warning Ignored. Amos 5: 1-9.
T. May 1. Israel Unrepentant. II Kings 17: 13-18.
F. May 2. Foreigners Brought Into Samaria. II Kings 17: 24-29.
S. May 3. Mixed Worship. II Kings 17: 30-36.
S. May 4. A Prayer for Righteousness. Ps. 119: 33-40.

THE LESSON STORY

The lesson brings us to the close of our short study of the history of Israel. The Northern Kingdom began in 931 B. C., with the coronation of Jeroboam as king. The last king of Israel was Hoshea. Israel was destroyed by Assyria in 722 B. C. Her history therefore, covered a period of only two hundred and nine years. It is rather a short period for a nation. How long a history has the United States? How long has China existed as a nation?

There were nearly twenty kings of Israel. Some were weak; some strong. Jeroboam I, Ahab, Jehu, and Jeroboam II were among the strongest. The kings of Israel were, with few exceptions, followers of idolatry, and brought upon their people national disaster. The first king of Israel had set up two calves, one at Dan, and the other at Bethel, saying, "These be thy gods, O Israel." He had done so perhaps innocently, thinking that he could continue to worship Jehovah by means of these symbols, and keep his own people from going to Jerusalem. His successors, however, forgot the symbolism, and treated these idols as the real gods of the nation. Jeroboam little knew that what he did would in the end bring about both moral and national overthrow.

To Think About: It is a good and great thing to have high examples to follow. What a wonderful thing it is that America has people to look up to such as George Washington, the father of his country, a man of faith and courage and devotion to God.

THE ENEMY OF ISRAEL

The great enemy of Israel was Assyria, the mighty empire on the East. Its kings have strange, and perhaps unfamiliar names, but they were great and mighty emperors. The names of these monarchs who threatened and at last overcame Israel were Tiglath-pileser, Shal-

maneser, and Sargon. Tiglath-pileser invaded Israel about 740 B. C., and in 722 B.C. Israel was conquered by Sargon. Sargon's magnificent palace erected in 712 B.C. at Khorsabad near Nineveh, which has recently been restored, enables us to appreciate the power and magnificence of the great empire over which he reigned.

"The rooms were of immense size, the walls wainscoted with sculptured alabaster slabs, the entrances guarded by colossi. It was discovered by M. Botta, French consul to Mosul, in 1842, and excavated by the French Government. The wall extending from the palace forms one side of the great royal park a mile square. Within the inclosure were lakes and pleasure houses. The terraced pyramid is a temple for sun worship."

To Think About: God uses one nation to discipline another nation. He used America in the Spanish-American War to teach Spain that slavery and cruelty can no longer be tolerated. All nations are his servants.

THE CONDITION OF ISRAEL

On the surface Israel was not in immediate danger. The people were unaware that danger threatened them, and the Bible history does not tell us very much of what was taking place under the surface. We learn the real condition of the nation from the prophets Amos and Hosea, whose messages we studied last week. Their words let in a flood of light upon the social condition of the people. One of the old poets said:

> "Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
> Where wealth accumulates, and men decay."

This was what was happening in Israel. From Amos and Hosea we learn that the heart of the nation was not sound, and, as a tree rotten at the heart falls before the first onrush of the storm, so the weakness of Israel was revealed in her first contest with Assyria. Outwardly things looked well.

"To all external appearances both kingdoms were prosperous and powerful; but the majority of their citizens were sad and sodden, crushed by the small ruling class that wrongfully exploited them. Their social problems were those of the modern city and of a developed commercial civilization: special class privilege, misuse of authority, unjust distribution of the burden of taxation, and the wicked exploitation of the masses. To make matters worse, the old popular Semitic conception of religion still prevailed. As long as the rulers brought rich sacrifices to the sanctuaries and faithfully met the demands of the ritual, they felt sure of Jehovah's favor and protection. Though the very offerings they brought to Jehovah had been wrested from their fellow countrymen by injustice and oppression, they felt confident that all was well, since Jehovah was prospering them. Even at the great religious festivals there were gluttony, drunkenness, and immorality; and yet they believed that by the splendor of their ritual

they were purchasing Jehovah's continued favor. The poor, who had no such offerings to bring, must have felt indeed that heaven was against them."

To Think About: God is on the side of the poor and the oppressed. Any religion that does not make life sweeter and easier for those who find life hard is no religion at all. Jesus began his ministry by proclaiming that he had come to preach the gospel to the poor.

THE FALL OF ISRAEL

The downfall of Israel, although it came suddenly in the end, was in fact long in coming. King Menahem of Israel began paying tribute to Assyria, about 740 B. C., in order to keep his throne. Assyria tasted the fruit of victory, and the king of Israel was saved only by paying tribute to the enemy to the amount of what to-day would mean $30,000,000. Menahem paid this vast amount out of the taxes which he levied on the sixty thousand landowners.

This was, however, only the beginning of a long series of national humiliations. The last king of Israel, Hoshea, outdid the tribute money of his predecessors, and obligated the nation to pay over to Assyria what in our day would be equivalent in purchasing power to $35,000,000. He bought off the enemy, but it was only for a time. The sum was too great a burden, and when Tiglath-pileser of Assyria died, Hoshea the king entered into an agreement with Egypt and refused to keep his promise to Assyria. The new king of Assyria Shalmaneser, invaded Israel, took Hoshea prisoner, and started a siege of Samaria. For three long years the city held out, then it was destroyed. Many of its inhabitants were taken captive, and all the leading people of wealth and position were thrust out into exile.

To Think About: To buy position and ease with money is bribery. To permit such a thing to exist reflects an immoral condition in the political and social and religious life of a nation.

THE MEANING OF ISRAEL'S FALL

Israel was swept from history. The historian explains this by the rising power of the Assyrian Empire, but the Bible, seeking for the interpretation of history, gives us two outstanding reasons for the downfall, and these two reasons are in reality one.

(1) The overthrow of Israel was brought about by unfaithfulness to God. The people and their leaders had forsaken God, and turned to idols. Idolatry had become so outrageous that Baal worship with all its immoralities had been established.

(2) The prophets explained the downfall also as the result of social unrighteousness, which is sure to follow forsaking Jehovah. The words of Amos and Hosea point clearly to a condition which reflected injustice, oppression, and social slavery. Wealth and luxury increased among the nobles, with corrupt moral practices and gross intemperance. Side by side with this were the poverty and down-

trodden condition of the common people. God works through social laws, and the oppressors of God's poor always come to punishment. Israel's wealth, of course, had excited Assyria, and Assyria's dominant power in the East demanded that she control Israel, which was the pathway to Egypt. Nevertheless the reasons of the downfall lay deeper: "Israel fell because her wealth excited the greed of Assyria, because she lay in the path of Assyria's conquering ambition; these were economic and political reasons that had no relation to Israel's deserts. But Israel fell in a deeper and more significant way—had, indeed, been falling for years before the final crash. Greed, materialism, and lust had destroyed national and individual character and substituted debasing Canaanite forms of worship for the ethical worship of Jehovah; for that reason her fall meant extinction. When the great catastrophe came, Israel had nothing worth saving—not an ideal nor a God. Assyria destroyed her political identity, but sin had already destroyed her soul."

To Think About: Memorize these two stanzas:

"O God, beneath thy guiding hand
Our exiled fathers crossed the sea;
And when they trod the wintry strand,
With prayer and psalm they worshiped thee.

"Thou heard'st, well pleased, the song, the prayer:
Thy blessing came; and still its power
Shall onward, through all ages, bear
The memory of that holy hour."

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

1. How long did the Kingdom of Israel endure?
2. Show how Israel began on the wrong path, and compare the way she started with the origin of America's social and national life.
3. Why was it so easy for people to lapse into idolatry? What inducement did idolatry hold out to them?
4. God did not fail to warn Israel. Amos and Hosea had definitely told the people that they were living on the edge of a precipice.
5. "The wages of sin is death." Whatsoever a nation sows it reaps. The harvest comes long after the seed-sowing. God does not pay at the end of every day, but in the end, he pays.
6. The Arabs have a tradition that a little worm gnawed for years at the staff of Solomon. At last the staff broke, and the king fell. Apply this story to the history of Israel.

THE SHORTER CATECHISM

Q. 19. What is the misery of the estate whereinto man fell?

A. All mankind, by their fall, lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all the miseries of this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell for ever.

JEHOIADA'S VICTORY OVER BAAL

THE GOLDEN TEXT: "Be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might."—Eph. 6: 10.

TEXT OF LESSON, II Kings 11: 1-4, 11-18.

For entire lesson, see I Kings 14: 21 to 15: 24; ch. 22; II Kings, chs. 11, 12.

AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION

1 Now when Ath-a-li'ah the mother of A-ha-zi'ah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the seed royal.

2 But Je-hosh'e-ba, the daughter of king Jo'ram, sister of A-ha-zi'ah, took Jo'ash the son of A-ha-zi'ah, and stole him away from among the king's sons that were slain, even him and his nurse, *and put them* in the bedchamber; and they hid him from Ath-a-li'ah, so that he was not slain;

3 And he was with her hid in the house of Je-ho'vah six years. And Ath-a-li'ah reigned over the land.

4 And in the seventh year Je-hoi'a-da sent and fetched the captains over hundreds of the Car'ites and of the guard, and brought them to him into the house of Je-ho'vah; and he made a covenant with them, and took an oath of them in the house of Je-ho'vah, and showed them the king's son.

* * * * *

11 And the guard stood, every man with his weapons in his hand, from the right side of the house to the left side of the house, along by the altar and the house, by the king round about.

12 Then he brought out the king's son, and put the crown upon him, and *gave him* the testimony; and they made him king, and anointed him; and they clapped their hands, and said, *Long* live the king.

13 And when Ath-a-li'ah heard the noise of the guard *and of* the people, she came to the people into the house of Je-ho'vah:

14 And she looked, and, behold, the king stood by the pillar, as the manner was, and the captains and the trumpets by the king; and all the people of the land rejoiced, and blew trumpets. Then Ath-a-li'ah rent her clothes, and cried, Treason! treason!

AUTHORIZED VERSION

1 And when Ath-a-li'ah the mother of A-ha-zi'ah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the seed royal.

2 But Je-hosh'e-ba, the daughter of king Jo'ram, sister of A-ha-zi'ah, took Jo'ash the son of A-ha-zi'ah, and stole him from among the king's sons *which were* slain; and they hid him, *even* him and his nurse, in the bedchamber from Ath-a-li'ah, so that he was not slain.

3 And he was with her hid in the house of the LORD six years. And Ath-a-li'ah did reign over the land.

4 ¶ And the seventh year Je-hoi'a-da sent and fetched the rulers over hundreds, with the captains and the guard, and brought them to him into the house of the LORD, and made a covenant with them, and took an oath of them in the house of the LORD, and shewed them the king's son.

* * * * *

11 And the guard stood, every man with his weapons in his hand, round about the king, from the right corner of the temple to the left corner of the temple, *along* by the altar and the temple.

12 And he brought forth the king's son, and put the crown upon him, and *gave him* the testimony; and they made him king, and anointed him; and they clapped their hands, and said, God save the king.

13 ¶ And when Ath-a-li'ah heard the noise of the guard *and* of the people, she came to the people into the temple of the LORD:

14 And when she looked, behold, the king stood by a pillar, as the manner *was*, and the princes and the trumpeters by the king, and all the people of the land rejoiced, and blew with trumpets: and Ath-a-li'ah rent her clothes, and cried, Treason, Treason.

15 And Je-hoi'a-da the priest commanded the captains of hundreds that were set over the host, and said unto them, Have her forth between the ranks; and him that followeth her slay with the sword. For the priest said, Let her not be slain in the house of Je-ho'vah.

16 So they made way for her; and she went by the way of the horses' entry to the king's house: and there was she slain.

17 And Je-hoi'a-da made a covenant between Je-ho'vah and the king and the people, that they should be Je-ho'vah's people; between the king also and the people.

18 And all the people of the land went to the house of Ba'al, and brake it down; his altars and his images brake they in pieces thoroughly, and slew Mat'tan the priest of Ba'al before the altars. And the priest appointed officers over the house of Je-ho'vah.

15 But Je-hoi'a-da the priest commanded the captains of the hundreds, the officers of the host, and said unto them, Have her forth without the ranges: and him that followeth her kill with the sword. For the priest had said, Let her not be slain in the house of the LORD.

16 And they laid hands on her; and she went by the way by the which the horses came into the king's house: and there was she slain.

17 ¶ And Je-hoi'a-da made a covenant between the LORD and the king and the people, that they should be the LORD'S people; between the king also and the people.

18 And all the people of the land went into the house of Ba'al, and brake it down; his altars and his images brake they in pieces thoroughly, and slew Mat'tan the priest of Ba'al before the altars. And the priest appointed officers over the house of the LORD.

DAILY HOME READINGS

M. May 5. Seeking God's Counsel. I Kings 22: 1-9.
T. May 6. True and False Prophecy. I Kings 22: 13-23.
W. May 7. Joash Saved. II Kings 11: 1-4.
T. May 8. Joash Crowned. II Kings 11: 9-12.
F. May 9. Athaliah's Death. II Kings 11: 13-17.
S. May 10. Victory Over Baal. II Kings 11: 18-21.
S. May 11. The Righteous and the Wicked. Psalm 1.

PROMINENT PERSONS

Jehoiada. The high priest during the reigns of Ahaziah, Athaliah, and Joash.

Jehosheba. The wife of Jehoiada, the high priest. She was a daughter of King Joram, or Jehoram, the sister of Ahaziah, king of Judah, who reigned only a year. He was slain at the time of Jehu's revolt.

Athaliah. Queen of Judah, daughter of Ahab, king of Israel, and mother of Ahaziah, and wife of King Joram.

Joash. Called also Jehoash, son of Ahaziah, king of Judah; proclaimed king at the age of seven. He reigned for forty years.

THE KING OF JUDAH

United Israel came to its full glory during the reign of Solomon. The entire country had never been fully united, but the tribes were brought into acknowledged nationality under the great reigns of Saul, David, and Solomon. After the death of Solomon, the nation,

owing to high taxation and extravagance, broke up into two parts, Israel and Judah. In our former lessons we have followed the history of the Northern Kingdom, and found that it was overthrown by Assyria in 722 B.C. Judah continued another century or so, but finally fell before Babylon in 587 B.C.

The first king of Judah was Rehoboam, who reigned for seventeen years. He was succeeded by his son Abijah who reigned for three years. Asa, the son of Abijah, reigned for over forty years. Jehoshaphat, the son of Asa, reigned for twenty-five years, and through a marriage alliance Israel and Judah were brought closer together. The son of Jehoshaphat, Jehoram, married Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab, king of Israel, and reigned for eight years. Ahaziah was the son of Jehoram and Athaliah. He was killed in battle after a reign of one year, and the throne was seized by his mother Athaliah, a notoriously wicked woman who was put to death by the people, and who was succeeded by Joash. The history of our lesson covers the period when Ahaziah, Athaliah, and Joash reigned in Judah.

To Think About: Apart from the few years when Athaliah, the wicked queen, reigned in Judah, the throne was occupied by a direct line of descendants from David. This shows that there was a loyal people behind a somewhat stable government.

THE WICKED QUEEN

The Kingdom of Judah, which begins with Rehoboam in 931 B.C., continued to the fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C., a period of over three hundred and forty-four years. The Northern Kingdom lasted for about two hundred years. For one hundred years there had been constant friction between Judah and Israel. Then, in the reign of Jehoshaphat, his son Jehoram was united in marriage to Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. This made for peace between the two countries, but in the end brought disaster upon Judah.

Athaliah inherited from her mother Jezebel not only her cruel disposition, but her devotion to Baal, the heathen deity whose worship Elijah had sought to drive from the land. When her son Ahaziah, who reigned only a year, was killed, Athaliah rose up and killed, she supposed, all the heirs to the throne. She seized the reigns of government, and without being crowned, reigned over Judah for a period of six years.

The story of her reign with all its evil influence is told in our lesson. "Now when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the seed royal." She had not only introduced the worship of Baal, but had built a temple to this false god with altars and images, with priests and sacrifices. She had displaced the worship of Jehovah by the worship of Baal, with all its immorality and idolatry.

To Think About: Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, allowed his son Jehoram to enter into a worldly marriage with the daughter of a heathen queen. Marriage requires thought and prayer, and Christians should enter into this sacred relation only with those who hold the same religious principles and have the same views of life.

THE RESCUE OF THE PRINCE

Athaliah thought that she had made her claim to the throne secure. She thought that she had killed all who had a right to the crown, but evil is often outwitted. She had overlooked a little child, a little baby boy, who, like Moses, had been hidden away to avoid the wrath of wickedness. The story as told is very short, but very vivid.

"But Jehosheba, the daughter of king Joram, sister of Ahaziah, took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him away from among the king's sons that were slain, even him and his nurse, and put them in the bedchamber; and they hid him from Athaliah, so that he was not slain; and he was with her hid in the house of Jehovah six years. And Athaliah reigned over the land."

There is no doubt that Jehosheba, who was also the daughter of King Joram, and the wife of the priest Jehoiada, had much to do with the rescue of the little lad. Jehosheba was a half-sister of Ahaziah. Nevertheless she had remained true to Jehovah, and had married the priest of the Temple.

We would like to know how she secured the boy Joash, and hid him in a side room of the Temple. Nevertheless she succeeded in her purpose, and for six years acted the part of a mother to the boy who was later to become king. It is a remarkable story of how wickedness can be outwitted by love, and how a little child can undo the work of deceit and violence.

To Think About: Compare the character and purpose of Athaliah with that of Jehosheba.

THE REIGN OF ATHALIAH

Athaliah thought that she was secure in her palace, and on the throne. The years went by, and Joash, the heir to the throne, lived in security and in secret in the Temple. We are not told why Jehoiada, the priest, delayed making known his whereabouts for so long. Perhaps the time was not ripe for action, as the people had not yet realized the wickedness and worthlessness of the reign of Athaliah, the usurper. Perhaps, too, Jehoiada, and his wife wished to train Joash in the ways of the Lord, and prepare him in his childhood for his great work in the world.

When the time arrived to assert the rights of Joash to the throne, Jehoiada prepared a careful plan. He brought the soldiers who guarded the Temple, and showed them the boy king. They were amazed and overjoyed that a true heir to the throne still lived, and

were ready to obey any suggestions which Jehoiada the priest proposed.

It is rather difficult to follow the plan as outlined. It would seem, however, that on the Sabbath one third of the soldiers guarded the palace and two thirds the Temple. These soldiers were stationed around the palace to prevent Athaliah, the queen, and her supporters from leaving the palace, and the other soldiers guarded the Temple to secure the safety of the boy king.

When all was ready Jehoiada brought in Joash and presented him to the people. It was a great moment. The people had grown weary of the wickedness of Athaliah, but they saw no way out, for they believed that all the royal house had been destroyed. They were wild with joy when they saw the royal prince and gave expression to their joy when Jehoiada placed the crown upon his head. A ringing cheer sounded through the Temple. "Long live the king!" That cheer and shout was heard in the palace, and Athaliah knew that she was face to face with destiny.

To Think About: "The darkest hour is just before the dawn." When the people had lost heart and despaired of relief, a door of hope suddenly opened. It is always so when we put our trust in the living God.

THE DEATH OF THE QUEEN

The shout of joy which resounded through the Temple and echoed in the palace brought Athaliah forth in haste. She came alone to the Temple, for the guards permitted her to leave the palace, but prevented her followers from accompanying her. The sight in the Temple quickly revealed to her what had happened. There by a pillar stood the young king, crowned, with the priests at his side, and thronging the Temple she saw the eager people, full of joy, and singing their songs of hope. She was not the real ruler of the people, for she had come to the throne through blood and tragedy, yet she cried, "Treason! treason!"

Her outburst, however, was of no avail, for the guards crowded around her before she could do anything and she found herself a prisoner. The plan was a complete success. The queen unconsciously had surrendered herself into the hands of the soldiers. Jehoiada had already passed sentence upon her. She was worthy of death. She was a murderer.

Not wishing, however, to have her slain in the Temple they guided her forcibly out from the sacred place, and between the Temple and the palace she was slain. She had taken the sword, and she perished by the sword. Thus ended the life of one of the most wicked and cruel women in history.

To Think About: Why do you prefer Jehosheba to Athaliah? The one was quiet, retiring, obscure; the other was powerful, masterful, and conscienceless.

JOASH THE REFORMER

The life and reign of Joash is one of the most interesting in Hebrew history. Jehoiada and his wife Jehosheba trained him well, and he entered upon his work with full reliance upon Jehovah. The lesson tells us that "Jehoiada made a covenant between Jehovah and the king and the people, that they should be Jehovah's people; between the king also and the people."

Joash was the type of statesman who was interested primarily in religion. He did not seek first of all to build up trade and commerce, but sought to preserve the integrity of the nation and to establish true religion in the land. He was a reformer, driving out the Baal worship, and reëstablishing truth and justice in the state. He took his place among those Hebrew rulers who believed that true government must concern itself with religion.

To Think About: In an address delivered May 25, 1923, Judge Gary, president of the American Iron and Steel Institute, said: "What has wrought the great changes during the last twenty-five hundred years? War has had much—everything—to do with it. Why did an all-powerful and merciful Providence permit such awful destruction and decadence? Read history and ascertain; read Paul's Epistles. Perhaps you will discover some reasons why the Roman Empire fell; why Babylon fell; why Jerusalem was many times destroyed; why many great cities and nations fell from power and prosperity; but more particularly, why other great nations may hereafter perish. Is a sermon being preached? No, it is simple, plain, business sense. Gentlemen, it is in accordance with our instincts and judgment, as frequently proclaimed, to say that it pays a nation or an individual to follow a Christian course."

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

1. Athaliah was the daughter of Jezebel. Both were wicked woman, yet both were interested in religion. What was their religion?
2. Jehoiada and his wife Jehosheba were godly people. What do you most admire about that? Compare Jehosheba and Athaliah.
3. When is religion justified in revolting against the state? If you were in Russia what would be your attitude toward the state?
4. What is the duty of the state toward religion?
5. What is the duty of religion to the state?

THE SHORTER CATECHISM

Q. 20. Did God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery?

A. God, having out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer.

ISAIAH AND THE ASSYRIAN CRISIS

**THE GOLDEN TEXT: "God is our refuge and strength,
A very present help in trouble."
—Ps. 46: 1.**

TEXT OF LESSON, Isa. 37: 14, 21-23, 29, 33-36.
For entire lesson, see II Kings, chs. 18 to 20; Isa., chs. 36 to 38.

AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION

14 And Hez-e-ki'ah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it; and Hez-e-ki'ah went up unto the house of Je-ho'vah, and spread it before Je-ho'vah.

* * * * *

21 Then I-sa'iah the son of A'moz sent unto Hez-e-ki'ah, saying, Thus saith Je-ho'vah, the God of Is'ra-el, Whereas thou hast prayed to me against Sen-nach'e-rib king of Assyr'i-a,

22 This is the word which Je-ho'vah hath spoken concerning him: The virgin daughter of Zi'on hath despised thee and laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of Je-ru'sa-lem hath shaken her head at thee.

23 Whom hast thou defied and blashphemed? and against whom hast thou exalted thy voice and lifted up thine eyes on high? *even* against the Holy One of Is'ra-el.

* * * * *

29 Because of thy raging against me, and because thine arrogancy is come up into mine ears, therefore will I put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest.

* * * * *

33 Therefore thus saith Je-ho'vah concerning the king of As-syr'i-a, He shall not come unto this city, nor shoot an arrow there, neither shall he come before it with shield, nor cast up a mound against it.

34 By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and he shall not come unto this city, saith Je-ho'vah.

35 For I will defend this city to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant Da'vid's sake.

36 And the angel of Je-ho'vah went forth, and smote in the camp of the As-syr'i-ans a hundred and

AUTHORIZED VERSION

14 ¶ And Hez-e-ki'ah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hez-e-ki'ah went up unto the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD.

* * * * *

21 ¶ Then I-sa'iah the son of A'moz sent unto Hez-e-ki'ah, saying, Thus saith the LORD God of Is'ra-el, Whereas thou hast prayed to me against Sen-nach'e-rib king of Assyr'i-a:

22 This *is* the word which the LORD hath spoken concerning him; The virgin, the daughter of Zi'on, hath despised thee, *and* laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of Je-ru'sa-lem hath shaken her head at thee.

23 Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? and against whom hast thou exalted *thy* voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high? *even* against the Holy One of Is'ra-el.

* * * * *

29 Because thy rage against me, and thy tumult, is come up into mine ears, therefore will I put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest.

* * * * *

33 Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the king of As-syr'i-a, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shields, nor cast a bank against it.

34 By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the LORD.

35 For I will defend this city to save it for mine own sake, and for my servant Da'vid's sake.

36 Then the angel of the LORD went forth, and smote in the camp of the As-syr'i-ans a hundred and

fourscore and five thousand; and when men arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies.

fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they *were* all dead corpses.

DAILY HOME READINGS

M. May 12. Assyria Defies Israel. Isa. 36: 1-10.
T. May 13. Assyria Defies Israel's God. Isa. 36: 13-20.
W. May 14. Isaiah's Courage. Isa. 37: 1-7.
T. May 15. Hezekiah's Prayer for Deliverance. Isa. 37: 14-20.
F. May 16. Arrogance Rebuked. Isa. 37: 21-29.
S. May 17. Victory Over Assyria. Isa. 37: 30-38.
S. May 18. "Our Refuge and Strength." Psalm 46.

HEZEKIAH THE KING

Joash, about whom we studied last week, reigned for forty years. He reëstablished the religion of Jehovah, and destroyed the Baal worship which had been introduced and established in the land by Athaliah. He was followed by Amaziah, and then by Uzziah, who was the most prosperous Hebrew ruler since the time of Solomon. During his reign commerce, trade, and agriculture were greatly enlarged. The country became exceedingly prosperous. Tribute was received from other smaller states, and trade routes were established along the seacoast down into Arabia and Egypt. Wealth and luxury abounded.

A sense of security came upon the nation, and at the same time formalism took hold upon the religion of the people. The first chapter in the prophecy of Isaiah discloses a rather terrible situation. It has been called the "great arraignment." The prophet says:

"Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; new moon and sabbath, the calling of assemblies,—I cannot away with iniquity and the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth; they are a trouble unto me; I am weary of bearing them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek justice, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow."

To Think About: Are there greater dangers attending prosperity than adversity? Who offered the prayer, "Give me neither poverty nor riches"?

THE CALL TO REPENTANCE

Uzziah, the great king who had reigned for more than half a century, had died. His death was tragic. He had grown arrogant and irreverent, and had been smitten with leprosy. During the last years of his life he had been secluded in a leper asylum, and Jotham

his son reigned in his stead. When Uzziah died Isaiah was a young man, born an aristocrat.

He felt the hand of God upon the nation, and he knew that danger was at hand. Entering the Temple one day he beheld as in a vision the empty throne of Israel no longer empty, but occupied by Jehovah himself. Uzziah the king was dead, but God lived, and could call him into service, and in response to that call Isaiah as a young man had answered: "Here am I. Send me."

It is necessary to read several of the early chapters of Isaiah to understand the condition of the land and the message which Isaiah delivered. The land was full of soothsayers, of the idle rich, of chariots and horsemen, and of careless and irreverent worshipers. Judgment was near at hand. The careless rulers, the dress-loving, luxury-loving women, would be punished. Read what the prophet says about the fashionable women of his day. Isa. 3:16 to 4:1. Injustice was rampant. Drunkenness characterized both high and low, and the storm clouds hung above the land ready to break.

To Think About: When is it right and proper for a preacher to deal with political matters? Have not all great preachers been in a sense statesmen? What influences did Savonarola, Luther, John Knox, and Henry Ward Beecher have upon the political policies of their times?

A CRISIS IN HISTORY

From the very beginning Isaiah looked upon Assyria as an instrument in the hands of God for the punishment of the sins of the people of Judah. Isaiah saw that God was using Assyria to chastise his own people. Notwithstanding the fact that Hezekiah "did that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah, according to all that David his father had done," he was not able to save his people from the Assyrian menace.

He had introduced many reforms, had gathered the priests and the Levites together, and sanctified them for the worship of Jehovah. The Temple was cleansed, and in the midst of penitence and prayer, sacrifices, and burnt offerings, sin offerings, and peace offerings were laid upon the altar. The passover was restored, and the people rejoiced in the fact that Jehovah had heard their prayers and had granted them prosperity.

To Think About: God uses nations to teach other nations his will and word. Can you discover in what way God is using Germany, Russia, and America?

THE PROPHET'S FAITH

Assyria coveted Judah because Judah was situated between Assyria and Egypt. The Assyrian king saw in Judah a prize to be grasped. Isaiah, however, understood that beneath all the pur-

poses of kings and nations the divine purpose ultimately triumphs. Assyria seemed to lord it over Judah, but Isaiah persisted in proclaiming the fact that Assyria in the end would be destroyed. Again and again he repeated his promise of hope. These are some of his prophecies:

"Wherefore it shall come to pass, that, when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria."

"Behold, the Lord, Jehovah of hosts, will lop the boughs with terror: and the high of stature shall be hewn down, and the lofty shall be brought low. And he will cut down the thickets of the forest with iron, and Lebanon shall fall by a mighty one."

"In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah: We have a strong city; salvation will he appoint for walls and bulwarks."

Isaiah suggests that the blow that will fall upon Assyria will be sudden and decisive. In 701 B.C., Sennacherib invaded Judah at the head of an immense army. The Assyrian hosts swept all before them, and then finally the king sent part of his army to demand the surrender of Jerusalem. For this purpose he sent the Rabshakeh, a statesman of singular genius.

The Rabshakeh announced to the people that nothing could save Jerusalem, that as other cities had fallen before the Assyrians so Jerusalem would fall. He even went so far as to say that Assyria was an instrument in God's hands to punish Jerusalem. When the Rabshakeh failed, Sennacherib himself wrote a letter to Hezekiah, warning him that there was no help and that no deliverance could come.

This was a supreme crisis. The people turned to Isaiah, and Isaiah still persisted in proclaiming that Sennacherib and not Jerusalem would be destroyed. At the very moment when the Assyrian hosts were preparing to close in upon Jerusalem and destroy it a sudden disaster took place. It is told in a few, brief, graphic words:

"And the angel of Jehovah went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand; and when men arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh."

To Think About: Isaiah the prophet was right. Faith triumphs over force. Appearances may be against faith, but faith trusts not in appearances, but in the living God.

THE WORK OF ISAIAH

Isaiah stands forth as a great patriot as well as a great prophet. It was he to whom the people and the king turned in the hour of their greatest need, and it was he who guided them through their perplexity into a place of peace.

His was a fourfold message. (1) It was a message calling for repentance. No one could have brought a more severe indictment against his nation than did Isaiah. He did not praise it. He blamed it. He did not speak smooth words, but true words. He charged the rulers with injustice, arrogance, and tyranny, and he charged the common people with carelessness, irreverence, and drunkenness. He indicted both priests and people, and perhaps his most scathing words were uttered concerning the women of his day.

(2) It was a message of hope. Isaiah did not fulfill his message when he brought the people face to face with their sin. He proclaimed a gospel of hope. There can be no gospel unless there is hope. No matter how dark the night, the morning would come at last.

(3) He proclaimed a message of the remnant. This means that the hope of the nation lay not in the many, but in the few. Isaiah believed in the minority rather than in the majority. He believed that a few loyal people would save the nation. This has always been the way by which God has worked.

(4) Isaiah proclaimed a message of the coming Messiah. He proclaimed the coming of the time when a child would be born and would bear the name "Emmanuel," "God with us." He made it clear that there would come One whose name was "Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace," and that the government of the world would be upon his shoulders.

To Think About: Matthew Arnold said that the one indispensable quality of true religion is the quality of hope. The New Testament speaks of God as the God of hope. There can be no gospel unless there be awakened within the hearts of the people a spirit of hope.

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

1. Give in brief outline the history of the Kingdom of Judah.
2. Account for the power which Isaiah exercised over the history of his time. Why did the king and the people trust him?
3. Point out that faith has its victories and that they are more splendid than the victories of force.
4. What does the phrase, "the hand of God in history," mean? What happened to Assyria? Can you give other historical events that reveal God's hand?
5. How do you account for the rise and fall of nations?
6. What is the duty of the modern Church toward the political problems of the present time?

THE SHORTER CATECHISM

Q. 21. Who is the Redeemer of God's elect?

A. The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so was, and continueth to be, God and man, in two distinct natures, and one person, for ever.

JEREMIAH AND THE BABYLONIAN CRISIS

THE GOLDEN TEXT: "Amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of Jehovah your God."—Jer. 26: 13.

TEXT OF LESSON, Jer. 26: 8-16.

For entire lesson, see Jer. 7: 1-26; 9: 1-9; 15: 1-10; 18: 1-12; 25: 1-14; chs. 26, 36, 38.

American Standard Version

8 And it came to pass, when Jer-e-mi'ah had made an end of speaking all that Je-ho'vah had commanded him to speak unto all the people, that the priests and the prophets and all the people laid hold on him, saying, Thou shalt surely die.

9 Why hast thou prophesied in the name of Je-ho'vah, saying, This house shall be like Shi'loh, and this city shall be desolate, without inhabitant? And all the people were gathered unto Jer-e-mi'ah in the house of Je-ho'vah.

10 And when the princes of Ju'dah heard these things, they came up from the king's house unto the house of Je-ho'vah; and they sat in the entry of the new gate of Je-ho'vah's *house*.

11 Then spake the priests and the prophets unto the princes and to all the people, saying, This man is worthy of death; for he hath prophesied against this city, as ye have heard with your ears.

12 Then spake Jer-e-mi'ah unto all the princes and to all the people, saying, Je-ho'vah sent me to prophesy against this house and against this city all the words that ye have heard.

13 Now therefore amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of Je-ho'vah your God; and Je-ho'vah will repent him of the evil that he hath pronounced against you.

14 But as for me, behold, I am in your hand: do with me as is good and right in your eyes.

15 Only know ye for certain that, if ye put me to death, ye will bring innocent blood upon yourselves, and upon this city, and upon the inhabitants thereof; for of a truth

Authorized Version

8 ¶ Now it came to pass, when Jer-e-mi'ah had made an end of speaking all that the LORD had commanded *him* to speak unto all the people, that the priests and the prophets and all the people took him, saying, Thou shalt surely die.

9 Why hast thou prophesied in the name of the LORD, saying, This house shall be like Shi'loh, and this city shall be desolate without an inhabitant? And all the people were gathered against Jer-e-mi'ah in the house of the LORD.

10 ¶ When the princes of Ju'dah heard these things, then they came up from the king's house unto the house of the LORD, and sat down in the entry of the new gate of the LORD'S *house*.

11 Then spake the priests and the prophets unto the princes and to all the people, saying, This man *is* worthy to die; for he hath prophesied against this city, as ye have heard with your ears.

12 ¶ Then spake Jer-e-mi'ah unto all the princes and to all the people, saying, The LORD sent me to prophesy against this house and against this city all the words that ye have heard.

13 Therefore now amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the LORD your God; and the LORD will repent him of the evil that he hath pronounced against you.

14 As for me, behold, I *am* in your hand: do with me as seemeth good and meet unto you.

15 But know ye for certain, that if ye put me to death, ye shall surely bring innocent blood upon yourselves, and upon this city, and upon the inhabitants thereof: for of a truth the Lord hath sent me

Je-ho'vah hath sent me unto you to speak all these words in your ears.

16 Then said the princes and all the people unto the priests and to the prophets: This man is not worthy of death; for he hath spoken to us in the name of Je-ho'-vah our God.

unto you to speak all these words in your ears.

16 ¶ Then said the princes and all the people unto the priests and to the prophets; This man *is* not worthy to die: for he hath spoken to us in the name of the LORD our God.

DAILY HOME READINGS

M. May 19. Jeremiah's Warning. Jer. 26: 1-7.
T. May 20. Jeremiah and the Babylonian Crisis. Jer. 26: 8-16.
W. May 21. False and True Worship. Jer. 7: 1-7.
T. May 22. Deceitfulness Avenged. Jer. 9: 1-9.
F. May 23. The Prophet's Anguish. Jer. 15: 5-10.
S. May 24. The Potter and the Clay. Jer. 18: 1-13.
S. May 25. Supplication and Confidence. Ps. 22: 1-8.

HISTORICAL STEPPING-STONES

Hezekiah was the last great king of Judah. He was followed by Manasseh, a man who led the people back into idolatry. Manasseh reigned for fifty-five years, and was one of the most wicked of all the kings of the Hebrew people. He undid all that which Hezekiah had tried to do. The political situation grew worse and worse, and at last Assyria took Manasseh into exile in chains. Although later he was restored to his kingdom, because of his penitence, he was a weak and worthless monarch.

Amon, his successor, followed in his father's steps, and it looked as if nothing could save the nation from overthrow. Josiah, the son of Amon, however, stemmed the tide of evil. Sometimes a bad man has a good son, and Josiah, the son of Amon, walked in the way of Jehovah, and did what was right in his sight. At the age of eight his heart turned to God. Idols and images were destroyed. The Temple with its worship was restored, and the book of the law was discovered in the Temple by Hilkiah, which led to a real revival of religion.

Whenever God's Word is reinstated, either in the home or in the Church or in the nation, there is always a reawakening of conscience, and a true standard of life is set up. Judge Gary, after his return from Palestine, said:

"If you should decide to visit Palestine, which it is hoped you will, before and after doing so thoroughly read again your Bible, this classic of classics, all in all the most interesting and fascinating of books. There are contained many things which, taken literally, we may not understand. It is not necessary, and it would perhaps be a waste of time to try. Our minds are too small, our understanding too limited. Possibly in some immaterial respects the published interpretations are literally incomplete, misleading or inapplicable to our time. But in the main the language, as used, is accurate and well authenticated by science and by actual observations.

The moral and religious principles of the Bible, both in the Old and New Testaments, have never been and can never be successfully combated. Since the preservation of history commenced there has never been anything approaching the Holy Bible as a literary production, or as a code for proper and desirable human conduct, or as the foundation for future hopes."

To Think About: Nations rise and fall, but God's plan abides. In concluding his poem, "In Memoriam," Tennyson had this great idea in his mind.

That God, which ever lives and loves,
One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off divine event,
To which the whole creation moves.

THE PROPHET JEREMIAH

Israel, the Northern Kingdom, fell before Assyria in 722 B.C. Judah became a vassal of Egypt in 609 B.C. Josiah had joined with Egypt against Assyria, and in the battle of Megiddo, Egypt overcame Judah, and Judah became tributary to Egypt. Judah never again came into complete independence. She became a vassal state of Egypt after the battle of Carchemish, and in 605 B.C. became a tributary state of Babylon.

The prophet of these tragic years was Jeremiah. He was born at Anathoth near Jerusalem, and was well-to-do. He was called to be a prophet, and the record of his call is found in the first chapter of The Book of Jeremiah. He felt himself unfit for the duty to which he was called, and, like Moses, hesitated to enter upon the arduous duties.

Judah was slipping from her place among the nations, and Jeremiah clearly saw that nothing could save her from the power of Babylon, which overshadowed all lesser powers. He was called a false prophet, a pessimist, and a discourager, and yet for a period of almost half a century he proclaimed incessantly his hopeless message that Judah would be destroyed and that Babylon would enter into possession of the Holy Land.

To Think About: Jeremiah is often spoken of as the "weeping prophet." Although it is true that he experienced sorrow and lived a tragic life, no one of the prophets was more of a hero than Jeremiah was. He stood alone. He suffered imprisonment, ridicule, and exile, but he refused to be silenced. We do not know anything about his last days, but we do know that he died in exile, faithful to God, and a patriot to the last.

A PREACHER OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Isaiah had proclaimed to his day and age that Jerusalem was inviolate, and that nothing could harm the Holy City. Isaiah's message had been abundantly confirmed. God had suddenly broken the

silence and swept the Assyrian forces that were besieging Jerusalem from the field, but Isaiah's doctrine had become a dogma, and in the days of Jeremiah the people had grown careless, thinking that no matter what they did, Jerusalem was safe. God would guard Jerusalem. No evil could befall it.

The result was that both priests and people sheltered themselves behind a false security. They were careless of their faith in God, and felt secure behind the promise which Isaiah had made generations before. Jeremiah swept all such false securities aside. He announced that Babylon was God's agent, and that sooner or later the arms of Babylon would encompass the Holy City.

Jeremiah was in a strange position. He alone among the prophets advised surrender. The other prophets proclaimed the inviolability of Jerusalem, that God had taken up his residence in the Temple, and that he would not suffer his people to be destroyed. The religion of Jehovah, they said, depended upon the permanency of Judah. Jeremiah did not so believe. He believed that the state could perish, but that the religion of Jehovah could endure. Jeremiah cared more for faith and religion than he did for politics and patriotism. He was ready to surrender political independence in order that his people might be free from unreality in religion and injustice in social life.

To Think About: Security for a government or for a person is not found in anything artificial but in integrity of life, in goodness, and in righteous conduct. Even America has no claim upon permanency except in so far as America is loyal to God and to his truth.

A PROPHET OF HOPE

It is no wonder that the people denounced Jeremiah. He seemed to lack patriotism. He proclaimed the overthrow of his own nation and the triumph of the enemy. Nevertheless he was right, and while he pronounced the doom of his nation he was nevertheless a prophet of hope. He believed that God, in his own day, would save and redeem his people. Jeremiah could not see how this would be done, but he believed that even although the nation would be destroyed, the religion of Jehovah would live and triumph.

History proved that Jeremiah was right. God allowed Jerusalem to be overthrown and to be destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, and the people of Judah were led into the great Captivity, but that Captivity was the means of purifying the religion of the Hebrew people, and out of it there came forth a religion purified of its idolatry.

Jeremiah never lost hope. He said, "After seventy years are accomplished for Babylon, I will visit you, and perform my good work toward you, in causing you to return to this place." Jeremiah himself confirmed his faith and hope by purchasing land, knowing that the day would come when Jerusalem again would be in the hands of his own people. He was a suffering prophet, and pointed forward

to the time when Jesus would reveal God on Calvary as the One who bore the sins of the world and by his cross entered into victory.

To Think About: "Jeremiah cared more for religion than for the state. He was quite ready to sacrifice political independence to win his people from a demoralized ritual and worship and anarchic social practices to ethical conduct and spiritual religion." Jeremiah was the first of the prophets to see that even failure might be used of God to reveal his love and power.

JEREMIAH THE HERO

Jeremiah was ridiculed and silenced. His neighbors sought to murder him. His own family mistrusted him. The prophets in Jerusalem condemned him. He was imprisoned and yet continued to proclaim his heroic message.

Like Luther before the priests and kings of Europe he stood alone. Nevertheless he varied not in his testimony, and even in the pit where he was imprisoned he refused to alter his message or even to be silent. Such heroism always commands respect, and the king upon his throne knew that of all the prophets Jeremiah spoke the truth.

To Think About: When Jesus asked his disciples "Who do men say that the Son of man is?" they said, "Some say John the Baptist; some, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah." There was something about Jesus which reminded the people of his age of Jeremiah. What was it in Jesus that made the people liken him to Jeremiah?

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

1. Would you call Jeremiah the greatest of the prophets?
2. Why did Jesus make the people of his time think that he was like Jeremiah?
3. Why was the work and the message of Jeremiah so very difficult?
4. How did history prove Jeremiah to be in the right?
5. Think of this: "You may not be in any legislative body; but neither are many of our statesmen. Public opinion is the great legislator everywhere. If you will, you may be a prophetic statesman. If you are ready to endure misunderstanding, scorn, social ostracism, and poverty for the sake of justice and righteousness you will not live in vain. But if you prize comfort and ease above the championship of Christ's Kingdom, God will not intrust you with that spiritual vision which is essential in great leadership."

THE SHORTER CATECHISM

Q. 22. How did Christ, being the Son of God, become man?

A. Christ, the Son of God, became man, by taking to himself a true body and a reasonable soul, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and born of her, yet without sin.

THE BABYLONIAN EXILE OF JUDAH

**THE GOLDEN TEXT: "Righteousness exalteth a nation;
But sin is a reproach to any people."
—Prov. 14: 34.**

TEXT OF LESSON, II Chron. 36: 11-21.

For entire lesson, see II Kings, chs. 21 to 25; II Chron., ch. 36.

American Standard Version

11 Zed-e-ki'ah was twenty and one years old when he began to reign; and he reigned eleven years in Je-ru'sa-lem:

12 And he did that which was evil in the sight of Je-ho'vah his God; he humbled not himself before Jer-e-mi'ah the prophet *speaking* from the mouth of Je-ho'vah.

13 And he also rebelled against king Neb-u-chad-nez'zar, who had made him swear by God: but he stiffened his neck, and hardened his heart against turning unto Je-ho'vah, the God of Is'ra-el.

14 Moreover all the chiefs of the priests, and the people, trespassed very greatly after all the abominations of the nations; and they polluted the house of Je-ho'vah which he had hallowed in Je-ru'sa-lem.

15 And Je-ho'vah, the God of their fathers, sent to them by his messengers, rising up early and sending, because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling-place:

16 But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and scoffed at his prophets, until the wrath of Je-ho'vah arose against his people, till there was no remedy.

17 Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chal-de'ans, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or virgin, old man or hoary-headed: he gave them all into his hand.

18 And all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of Je-ho'vah, and the treasures of the king, and of his princes, all these he brought to Bab'y-lon.

19 And they burnt the house of God, and brake down the wall of Je-ru'sa-lem, and burnt all the

Authorized Version

11 ¶ Zed-e-ki'ah *was* one and twenty years old when he began to reign, and reigned eleven years in Je-ru'sa-lem.

12 And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD his God, *and* humbled not himself before Jer-e-mi'ah the prophet *speaking* from the mouth of the LORD.

13 And he also rebelled against king Neb-u-chad-nez'zar, who had made him swear by God: but he stiffened his neck, and hardened his heart from turning unto the LORD God of Is'ra-el.

14 ¶ Moreover all the chief of the priests, and the people, transgressed very much after all the abominations of the heathen; and polluted the house of the LORD which he had hallowed in Je-ru'sa-lem.

15 And the LORD God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place:

16 But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till *there was* no remedy.

17 Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chal-dees', who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age: he gave *them* all into his hand.

18 And all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king, and of his princes; all *these* he brought to Bab'y-lon.

19 And they burnt the house of God, and brake down the wall of

palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof.

20 And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Bab'y-lon; and they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Per'si-a:

21 To fulfil the word of Je-ho'-vah by the mouth of Jer-e-mi'ah, until the land had enjoyed its sabbaths: *for* as long as it lay desolate it kept sabbath, to fulfil three-score and ten years.

Je-ru'sa-lem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof.

20 And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Bab'y-lon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Per'si-a:

21 To fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jer-e-mi'ah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: *for* as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil three-score and ten years.

DAILY HOME READINGS

M. May 26. The Book of the Law Discovered. II Kings 22: 8-13.
T. May 27. A National Reformation. II Kings 23: 1-6.
W. May 28. Repentance Too Late. II Kings 23: 21-27.
T. May 29. The Final Rebellion. II Chron. 36: 11-16.
F. May 30. The Doom Descends. II Chron. 36: 17-21.
S. May 31. The Sorrows of the Exiles. Psalm 137.
S. June 1. A Prayer for Salvation. Ps. 80: 1-7.

TIME.—Jerusalem was destroyed in the summer of 587 B.C.

PLACES.—Jerusalem was a city of about twenty thousand people. Nebuchadnezzar made his headquarters at Riblah, on the northern boundary of Palestine.

THE EXILE.—Counting from the time when Jeremiah first uttered his prophecy concerning the Captivity to the time of the return of the exiles from Babylon the period covered seventy years.

REFERENCES.—Read II Chron., ch. 36, II Kings, chs. 21 to 25, Jer. 52: 1-16; 29: 1-18.

THE LAST KING OF JUDAH

The last king of Judah was Zedekiah. He was twenty-one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned for eleven years. The Bible sums up his reign in a very brief sentence, "He did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah his God." No king had been found who was able to guide the people back into power after the death of Josiah. The death of Josiah was a great disaster to the Jewish people. His family was divided by jealousy, and the people were opposed to the religious reforms which he had begun.

Of the remaining four kings three of them were his sons, and the fourth was a grandson who reigned only three months. Jeremiah's prophecies reveal to us the condition of the country at that time. Moral disaster had overtaken the people, and the prophet charged them with avarice, falsehood, vileness, and immorality.

The king on his throne defied God and openly destroyed the Word which God himself had spoken to his prophet. Gradually the enemy of Judah in the person of Nebuchadnezzar closed in about Jerusalem.

The city was destroyed; the people were deported; Zedekiah, last of the kings of Judah, had his eyes put out and was carried a captive into a foreign land.

To Think About: There is an old story to the effect that two rabbis were walking about the ruins of Jerusalem. One of them wept bitterly. The other laughed. The weeping rabbi said to the laughing rabbi, "Why do you laugh?" He replied, "Because this very ruin assures us that God is true to his warning, and this very ruin assures us that the same God will also be true to his promise, and will restore Jerusalem to her glory."

ON THE WAY TO CAPTIVITY

The overthrow of Jerusalem did not come in a moment. Nebuchadnezzar and his Babylonian forces pressed upon Jerusalem for a period of forty years. Warning after warning came from Jeremiah, but was unheeded. The people were given full time to repent and consider, and had they listened to the voice of the prophet, the Holy City might have been saved.

In 605 B.C., in the fourth year of King Jehoiakim's reign, the first captivity of the people of Judah took place. At this time Daniel and his friends were carried off into Babylon, and it is from this date that the Babylonian Exile of seventy years is to be counted. In 598 B.C. Jehoiakim was made a captive by Nebuchadnezzar, put in fetters, and plans made to carry him off to Babylon, when he died. Jehoiachin, the son of Jehoiakim, was made king. He was as wicked and wayward as his father. He reigned only three months when the city was captured by Nebuchadnezzar, its Temple robbed of its treasures, and ten thousand of its best people deported.

King Jehoiachin was carried to Babylon and remained for thirty-seven years in prison. This was the second captivity, and it was at this time that Ezekiel accompanied the captives into exile.

To Think About: God's mercy is as sure as his justice. He is slow to anger and of great mercy. He is called in Scripture the "God of patience." The lesson verses clearly illustrate this truth:

"And Jehovah, the God of their fathers, sent to them by his messengers, rising up early and sending, because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling-place: but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and scoffed at his prophets, until the wrath of Jehovah arose against his people, till there was no remedy."

THE SIEGE OF JERUSALEM

The lesson text pictures the siege of Jerusalem by the Babylonian army. It lasted for a year and a half, from December, 588 B.C. to July, 586 B.C. Babylon had succeeded Assyria in the leadership of the world. One nation rises upon the ruins of another and Assyria and Egypt had gone down before the growing power of Babylon.

The king of Babylon was Nebuchadnezzar, who was not only a great king but a great general. He gathered about him a terrible army of Chaldeans, v. 17, who were renowned for their courage and their cruelty. All the elements of siege were present during this fateful year and a half. The Chaldeans razed the forts and mounds with their battering rams and catapults. Stones were cast into the city by engines of war, and flaming darts of fire fell upon the city by night.

The Jews bravely set themselves to defend the Holy City. Famine, however, coöperated with the enemy. Food was gone. So terrible was the situation that mothers were driven to murder and eat their children. Rich citizens and women of refinement wandered about searching for scraps among the garbage. "The houses were full of sick and wounded. The bloody fights between contending parties as to surrendering or holding out crowded the streets with horror; the roar of the siege night and day filled the air."

To Think About: It was during this siege, Jer. 32: 6-15, that Jeremiah bought a piece of land where the Chaldean army was encamped. This act showed that he had faith even then in the coming redemption. Livy, the historian, tells us that the land where Hannibal's camp was pitched outside the gates of Rome sold at its full price.

THE FALL OF JERUSALEM

One of the great tragedies of history is undoubtedly the fall of Jerusalem. The city had had a great history. It is called the Holy City, the City of the Great King, the City of David, and is celebrated in Hebrew history, in song, and in story. Not Rome, but Jerusalem, is the Eternal City.

The Jewish people believed that nothing could happen to Jerusalem. It was the dwelling place of God himself. Isaiah had preached during his reign that Jerusalem was inviolate, and that no evil could befall it. Isaiah, of course, was thinking of the power of faith in the eternal God, but in time the Jews came to feel that no matter what they did Jerusalem was safe. They were children of Abraham, and Jerusalem was the City of God. It was impregnable. The Psalms are full of the suggestion that nothing could happen to Zion. They said:

> "Walk about Zion, and go round about her;
> Number the towers thereof;
> Mark ye well her bulwarks;
> Consider her palaces:
> That ye may tell it to the generation following.
> For this God is our God for ever and ever:
> He will be our guide even unto death."

Nevertheless Jerusalem was destroyed and utterly demolished. Verses 17-20 of the lesson are very graphic. It is not necessary for

us to enlarge upon the terrors and tragedies of this great disaster. The city was broken up. The king fled, but was captured. His sons were slain before his eyes, and, according to an old Oriental custom, the eyes of the king were put out. He was bound in fetters and led off a captive into exile.

The Temple was burned. The walls of the city were broken down. The holy places were desecrated, and the people were carried off into exile. Some fled to Egypt. A few of the poorer sort remained to prey upon what was left.

To Think About: Places and palaces and towers and walls are not sacred. Life itself is not sacred. The only thing that is sacred is truth. God destroyed Jerusalem in order that his people might be redeemed. Jesus said that God did not make his dwelling place in Jerusalem, but that God could be worshiped anywhere, for God was Spirit.

THE LONG EXILE

Jeremiah foretold the Babylonian Captivity in 605 B.C. Counting from that day to the first return of the captives to Jerusalem again is a period of seventy years. From the destruction of Jerusalem, however, to the return of the exiles is a period of only fifty years.

Judah was left a desolation, and while a few Jewish people remained to till the land, it was overrun by the surrounding heathen people. A considerable colony of Jews established themselves in Egypt, and in recent times there have been discovered traces of their sojourn there. Jeremiah accompanied the exiles into Egypt, and there died.

These Egyptian exiles failed to influence Jewish history. They gradually were assimilated into Egyptian life, and were lost in the surrounding country, and the prevailing faiths of the lands. The exiles to Babylon, however, remained true to the faith of their fathers. They were given great liberties, and some never returned to Jerusalem. They were satisfied with Babylon. Many, however, and these among the best, yearned for the land of their fathers. Synagogues grew up in the Jewish colonies and the worship of Jehovah, without the Temple sacrifices, was carried on. Leaders such as Daniel, Ezekiel, Nehemiah, and Ezra rose up to lead the people in their heroic fight against the idolatry of the land of their exile, and to hold them true to Jehovah their God.

Why did God permit this disaster to fall upon his chosen people? There are many reasons, which in the light of history justify this tragic period of exile. (1) It was a punishment for the sin of the people. God is a righteous God, and will in no wise clear the guilty. (2) They came in touch with the horror of idolatry and were cured of their proneness to idolatrous faiths. (3) Separated from the Temple, their religion became more spiritual. The synagogue was instituted, and religion became more a matter of the heart. (4) There

was an important purpose behind the Exile. The Jews spread the knowledge of God, the one true God, among the dominant people of the earth, and this prepared the world for the coming of the Messiah.

To Think About: History justified the faith of Jeremiah. He did not live to see his own prophecies fulfilled, but they were fulfilled to the very letter, and in time the very land which Jeremiah had bought was occupied again by his own people.

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

1. Explain these words of Bishop Warren, "The great lesson to be learned from the destruction of Jerusalem is God's persistent, constant effort to prevent it."

2. In what way could we call Nebuchadnezzar an instrument in the hands of God?

3. Apply these words of Jeremiah to the Babylonian Exile: "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."

4. It was only a few people who returned from Babylon to rebuild Jerusalem. God saves by the few. He works with the minority. He believes in the "gospel of the remnant."

5. God will sacrifice anything for the redemption of his people. He will sacrifice even Jerusalem with its Temple. The story of the cross is the story of the sacrifice of God himself.

6. What do we mean by the phrase the "hand of God in history"?

THE SHORTER CATECHISM

Q. 23. What offices doth Christ execute as our Redeemer?

A. Christ, as our Redeemer, executeth the offices of a prophet, of a priest, and of a king, both in his estate of humiliation and exaltation.

EZEKIEL ENCOURAGES THE EXILES

THE GOLDEN TEXT: "I will seek that which was lost, and will bring back that which was driven away."—Ezek. 34: 16.

TEXT OF LESSON, Ezek. 34: 11-16, 25, 26.

For entire lesson, see Ps. 137: 1-6; Ezek., ch. 34.

AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION

11 For thus saith the Lord Je-ho'vah: Behold, I myself, even I, will search for my sheep, and will seek them out.

12 As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered abroad, so will I seek out my sheep; and I will deliver them out of all places whither they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day.

13 And I will bring them out from the peoples, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land; and I will feed them upon the mountains of Is'ra-el, by the watercourses, and in all the inhabited places of the country.

14 I will feed them with good pasture; and upon the mountains of the height of Is'ra-el shall their fold be: there shall they lie down in a good fold; and on fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Is'ra-el.

15 I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord Je-ho'vah.

16 I will seek that which was lost, and will bring back that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but the fat and the strong I will destroy; I will feed them in justice.

* * * * *

25 And I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause evil beasts to cease out of the land; and they shall dwell securely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods.

26 And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in its season; there shall be showers of blessing.

AUTHORIZED VERSION

11 ¶ For thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I, *even* I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out.

12 As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep *that are* scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day.

13 And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Is'ra-el by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country.

14 I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Is'ra-el shall their fold be: there shall they lie in a good fold, and *in* a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Is'ra-el.

15 I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord GOD.

16 I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up *that which was* broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment.

* * * * *

25 And I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land: and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods.

26 And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing.

DAILY HOME READINGS

M. June 2. False Shepherds. Ezek. 34: 1-6.
T. June 3. The Flock of God. Ezek. 34: 11-16.
W. June 4. "Showers of Blessing." Ezek. 34: 23-31.
T. June 5. The Watchman of Israel. Ezek. 33: 7-16.
F. June 6. Gracious Blessings Promised. Ezek. 36: 22-28.
S. June 7. A Sign to the Nations. Ezek. 39: 25-29.
S. June 8. The Good Shepherd. John 10: 11-16.

IN EXILE

Ezekiel is called the "prophet of the exile." He lived and prophesied in Babylon, and was a minister of mercy and hope to the captive exiles of Judah. The first captivity under Nebuchadnezzar took place in 605 B.C. when Daniel and his companions were carried off with others into Babylon. The second captivity took place in 598 B.C., when ten thousand of the best people of Judah were carried off into Babylon. Among these exiles was Ezekiel the prophet.

It was not until 586 B.C., that Jerusalem was destroyed, and the bulk of the people carried off out of their own land into Babylon. This wholesale exile of a people that were passionately devoted to their country is one of the tragedies of history. The people yearned and grieved for their own homeland.

> In a foreign land?
> If I forget thee, O Jerusalem,
> Let my right hand forget her skill.
> Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth,
> If I remember thee not;
> If I prefer not Jerusalem
> Above my chief joy."

To Think About: It is interesting to know what was happening in the rest of the world at the time of the Babylonian Captivity. Jerusalem was destroyed in 586 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar was king of Babylon. The Seven Wise Men were dominating Greece. Solon was sending forth his law from Athens. Sappho, the Greek poetess, was writing. Æsop was speaking his fables and Pythagoras was writing his philosophy.

EZEKIEL THE PROPHET

We know very little about Ezekiel. His name means "God doth strengthen" or "God is strong." We are told, however, that he was the son of a priest named Buzi, who was carried to Babylon during the second captivity. We are told nothing concerning his age or his circumstances. After five years he was called and consecrated by a remarkable vision to the prophetic office, and carried on his prophetic ministry for a period of twenty-two years.

He lived in a house of his own in a Jewish colony at Tel-abib. We know that he was married, and that his wife died on the day when Jerusalem was laid under siege. That story gives a touch of pathos to the little we know about him. "Son of man, behold, I take away

from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke: yet thou shalt neither mourn nor weep, neither shall thy tears run down." Ezekiel was one of the first missionaries of religion. He was a missionary to his own people in foreign lands.

To Think About: Ezekiel, although a captive himself, became a missionary and messenger to his own captive people. Paul says that he became " all things to all men." Do you know the story of Father Damien, who lived in the leper colony and became a leper missionary to lepers?

THE JEWS IN CAPTIVITY

The people to whom Ezekiel ministered were the exiles who had been deported from their own land and had settled in colonies in Babylon. We must be careful not to misunderstand their position. They were given a great deal of freedom, and many of them were so satisfied with their life and with their prosperity that they remained in Babylon and never returned to the homeland.

These Jewish exiles organized themselves into communities with elders and leaders. There the synagogue originated. You will find out on the prairie during the great periods of drought that the grass gathers into tufts in order that the moisture may be conserved. In the same way, in Babylon, in order to preserve their own religious and moral integrity the Jews grouped themselves together. It was necessary to do this for their own self-preservation.

In one of these colonies at Tel-abib, Ezekiel ministered. The people opposed him at first, and the false prophets rebuked him, for the people, together with these prophets, expected a speedy return to Jerusalem. For some time Ezekiel was unable to preach or to speak in public, and the elders came to him for counsel and advice, but after the fall of Jerusalem the people became favorable to Ezekiel and he ministered to them with a message of hope and faith in God. He proclaimed the coming of a time when the ransomed of the Lord would return to Zion with shouts of gladness, and the day of their exile would be past.

To Think About: Jeremiah and Ezekiel lived and prophesied at the same time. They never mention each other. One was in Jerusalem; the other in Babylon. Yet they proclaimed the same truths, preached the gospel of repentance and hope. There is reason to believe that Ezekiel was influenced by Jeremiah.

THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL

Perhaps among all the books of the Old Testament the Book of Ezekiel is less read and less known than any other. There are reasons for this. Ezekiel has been compared to Dante. He had a very vivid imagination, and like Dante spoke in terms of symbolism and allegory

and vision; for example, think of Ezekiel's great vision of the valley of dry bones, in which he saw a valley full of bones that were very dead and very dry. The Spirit of God said unto him, "Can these bones live?" Ezekiel said, "O Lord Jehovah, thou knowest." Then the Lord caused Ezekiel to prophesy, and there was a noise like the noise of the mighty wind and the breath of life came into the bones and the bones stood up upon their feet, an exceedingly great army. Then the Lord said:

"Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are clean cut off. Therefore prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, O my people; and I will bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am Jehovah, when I have opened your graves, and caused you to come up out of your graves, O my people. And I will put my Spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I will place you in your own land: and ye shall know that I, Jehovah, have spoken it and performed it, saith Jehovah."

This was Ezekiel's way of proclaiming a message of hope and salvation to his people. This wonderful book falls into three parts:

(1) Chs. 1 to 24. This section deals with the fall of Jerusalem, on account of the sin of the people.

(2) Chs. 25 to 32. This section deals with God's judgment upon the surrounding nations. Not only Judah, but all the nations of the earth, meet with judgment at the hands of a righteous God.

(3) Chs. 33 to 48. This section deals with the restoration of Israel to the Holy Land, and the coming in of the new order of the Kingdom of God.

To Think About: Read Ezek. 47: 1-12. In this remarkable vision Ezekiel speaks of the new life as a great river that flows from the very Temple out through the land, bringing life and blessing. Compare this with Rev. 22: 1. The prophet speaks of religion as a life-giving stream.

THE MESSAGE OF EZEKIEL

The lesson passage printed in the Quarterly gives us an example of Ezekiel's fine message to his people. He proclaims the truth that Jehovah is like a shepherd. The words are familiar to us but they must have sounded especially sweet to those exiles. How wonderful they are.

We turn immediately from these remarkable words of Ezekiel, ch. 34: 11-15, to the parable of Jesus about the lost sheep and the shepherd who leaves the ninety and nine and goes out into the wilderness to find that which was lost, Matt. 18: 12, 13. We turn also to the words in the beginning of John, ch. 10, in which Jesus calls himself the "good shepherd," who watches over his sheep so that none are lost.

This is a new note in prophecy. Ezekiel proclaims the truth with which we are now so familiar, that God is a Shepherd, and that every sheep is of infinite value to him. Ezekiel thinks not so much in national terms as in individual terms. Every soul is shepherded by the great Shepherd of the sheep.

To Think About: In this message which represents God as a Shepherd we approach the teachings of the New Testament. God cares for his own. He is the Good Shepherd, who giveth his life for the sheep.

EZEKIEL AS A PASTOR

Ezekiel combined two great qualities, those of pastor and of preacher. His preaching was characterized by imagination and tenderness. At the same time he was a pastor, caring like a shepherd for the sheep of his flock.

Ezekiel would not allow the people to rest in the belief that they suffered because of the sins of their fathers. He said that every man suffered for his own sin. He proclaimed the truth that the soul that sinneth shall die. The people were excusing themselves by blaming their suffering and their exile upon the sin of their fathers. They had a proverb to the effect that "the fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge." Ezekiel said: "As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, . . . all souls are mine"; the soul that sinned would die. Every man must stand alone before God.

Dr. George Matheson calls Ezekiel the "individualist," and compares him thus with Isaiah and Jeremiah: "Isaiah soars to the heights of the world; Jeremiah compasses the breadth of the world; but Ezekiel takes notice of the world's little things. The care for the individual is not a primitive state of culture. It is a late development of the art of every gallery."

To Think About: True religion is always personal. The hymns and prayers and songs that reach the heart have an individual note. We say and sing "The Lord Is My Shepherd," and "Jesus, Lover of My Soul."

THOUGHTS AND SUGGESTIONS

1. Compare Ezekiel's words about the shepherd with the teachings of our Lord.
2. Compare Ezekiel's promise of a new heart, Ezek. 11:19, with II Cor. 3:3.
3. Why is Ezekiel called an "individualist"?
4. What great symbols of religion did Ezekiel use in his prophesy?
5. Contrast the message of Ezekiel with that of Jeremiah and that of Isaiah. Where and when did Ezekiel live and work?

THE SHORTER CATECHISM

Q. 24. How doth Christ execute the office of a prophet?

A. Christ executeth the office of a prophet, in revealing to us, by his Word and Spirit, the will of God for our salvation.

THE RETURN AND THE REBUILDING OF THE TEMPLE

THE GOLDEN TEXT: "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God."—Isa. 40: 1.

TEXT OF LESSON, Ezra 3: 8-13; 6: 14, 15.

For entire lesson, see Ezra, chs. 1, 3 to 6

AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION

Ch. 3: 8 Now in the second year of their coming unto the house of God at Je-ru'sa-lem, in the second month, began Ze-rub'ba-bel the son of She-al'ti-el, and Jesh'u-a the son of Joz'a-dak, and the rest of their brethren the priests and the Le'vites, and all they that were come out of the captivity unto Je-ru'sa-lem, and appointed the Le'vites, from twenty years old and upward, to have the oversight of the work of the house of Je-ho'vah.

9 Then stood Jesh'u-a with his sons and his brethren, Kad'mi-el and his sons, the sons of Ju'dah, together, to have the oversight of the workmen in the house of God: the sons of Hen'a-dad, with their sons and their brethren the Le'vites.

10 And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of Je-ho'vah, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Le'vites the sons of A'saph with cymbals, to praise Je-ho'vah, after the order of Da'vid king of Is'ra-el.

11 And they sang one to another in praising and giving thanks unto Je-ho'vah, *saying*, For he is good, for his lovingkindness *endureth* for ever toward Is'ra-el. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised Je-ho'vah, because the foundation of the house of Je-ho'vah was laid.

12 But many of the priests and Le'vites and heads of fathers' *houses*, the old men that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy:

13 So that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping

AUTHORIZED VERSION

Ch. 3: 8 ¶ Now in the second year of their coming unto the house of God at Je-ru'sa-lem, in the second month, began Ze-rub'ba-bel the son of She-al'ti-el, and Jesh'u-a the son of Joz'a-dak, and the remnant of their brethren the priests and the Le'vites, and all they that were come out of the captivity unto Je-ru'sa-lem; and appointed the Le'vites, from twenty years old and upward, to set forward the work of the house of the LORD.

9 Then stood Jesh'u-a *with* his sons and his brethren, Kad'mi-el and his sons, the sons of Ju'dah, together, to set forward the workmen in the house of God: the sons of Hen'a-dad, *with* their sons and their brethren the Le'vites.

10 And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Le'vites the sons of A'saph with cymbals, to praise the LORD, after the ordinance of Da'vid king of Is'ra-el.

11 And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the LORD; because *he is* good, for his mercy *endureth* for ever toward Is'ra-el. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid.

12 But many of the priests and Le'vites and chief of the fathers, *who were* ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy:

13 So that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping

of the people; for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off.

* * * * *

Ch. 6: 14 And the elders of the Jews builded and prospered, through the prophesying of Hag'ga-i the prophet and Zech-a-ri'ah the son of Id'do. And they builded and finished it, according to the commandment of the God to Is'ra-el, and according to the decree of Cy'rus, and Da-ri'us, and Ar-tax-erx'es king of Per'si-a.

15 And this house was finished on the third day of the month A'dar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of Da-ri'us the king.

of the people: for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off.

* * * * *

Ch. 6: 14 And the elders of the Jews builded, and they prospered through the prophesying of Hag'ga-i the prophet and Zech-a-ri'ah the son of Id'do. And they builded, and finished *it*, according to the commandment of the God of Is'ra-el, and according to the commandment of Cy'rus and Da-ri'us, and Ar-tax-erx'es king of Per'si-a.

15 And this house was finished on the third day of the month A'dar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of Da-ri'us the king.

DAILY HOME READINGS

M. June 9. The Rebuilding of the Temple Commanded. Ezra, ch. 1.
T. June 10. Rebuilding Begun. Ezra 3: 8-13.
W. June 11. The Work Hindered. Ezra 4: 1-6.
T. June 12. The Work Stopped. Ezra 4: 17-24.
F. June 13. Building Resumed. Ezra 6: 1-12.
S. June 14. The Temple Dedicated. Ezra 6: 13-18.
S. June 15. The Joyful Return. Psalm 126.

CYRUS THE DELIVERER

The people of Judah had for centuries been dependent upon the will and the power of other nations. They were subject to the action and reaction of Syria, Egypt, Assyria, and Babylonia. At last Babylonia wrought the overthrow of Judah, and carried her people off into captivity.

The prophets had proclaimed the promise of Jehovah that the days of the Exile would come to an end and that Jehovah would intervene and save his people. That promise was fulfilled in a singularly strange and marvelous way. Babylonia had come into power in 605 B.C. and there seemed to be no hope that her power would fail.

Nevertheless her power did fail, and in 538 B.C. Babylonia the great was vanquished by Cyrus, who had been the ruler of the Medes and had obtained possession of Persia and the East.

The Bible represents Cyrus as a messenger of God. History presents him to us as one of the greatest men the world has known. He was tolerant, wise, and courageous. The nations which he conquered became his friends, and his genius for colonization was amazing. The Assyrian and the Babylonian conquered only to deport and to destroy. Cyrus restored all conquered and deported people, and developed and cultivated local customs and religions.

To Think About: The Bible represents Cyrus as an instrument

in the hands of God. He was not a worshiper of Jehovah, but God used him to fulfill his purposes.

THE RETURNING CAPTIVES

The policy of Cyrus was altogether different from that of Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar knew nothing about colonization. He deported his captives and destroyed their land. Cyrus, on the other hand, respected the people whom he had conquered. He treated all religion with respect, and it was characteristic that he should allow the Hebrew people to return to their own land and to rebuild their Temple. The edict for the return of the Jews was issued in 537 B.C. They were permitted to return to Judah, which became a tributary state under the authority of the Persian Government. He not only allowed them to return, but dealt with them generously.

To Think About: "For how many soever be the promises of God, in him is the yea: wherefore also through him is the Amen, unto the glory of God through us." God keeps faith with his people. He had promised their return. See Jer. 25:12-13; Ezek. 11:17; 37:12. Trust God's word.

THE JOY OF RETURN

The Hebrew Psalter is full of the joy of the returning captives. It was a wonderful group of people that left Babylon for Jerusalem. In Ezra, ch. 2, and Neh., ch. 7, a complete list of the exiles is given. They had kept it through organization all through their captivity. The record shows nearly fifty thousand persons.

It took Ezra four months to cross the desert, and the traveling caravans of the exiles would take much longer. On reaching Judah they restored the altar and in the second year laid the foundation of the Temple. There was much to do. Material had to be gathered and workmen secured and cedar brought from Lebanon. Meanwhile the fields had to be cultivated and the harvest reaped. When everything was built, a service of dedication was held. This service was something akin to the laying of a corner stone of one of our modern buildings. This service of dedication was carefully planned, and the service followed was that laid down by David himself.

To Think About: The first work of these returning exiles was to restore the altar of the Temple. They gave their first and best thought to the reëstablishment of religion. It was so with our Puritan ancestors. The Pilgrim Fathers gave their first thought to the establishment of churches and schools.

THE OLD AND THE YOUNG

The effect of the service was very interesting. Many shouted for joy and many wept. It was a very human sight. The old people who had seen the former Temple, and whose memories had glorified

it, could not hold back their tears as they compared the beauty of Solomon's Temple with the poor outlines of the Temple which they had begun to build. On the other hand the young people were happy-hearted and looked forward to more glorious days.

To Think About: Every young man and young woman should be an idealist, and believe that the future will be better than the past.

DELAY AND DEDICATION

The Temple foundation had been well and truly laid, and it looked as if the Temple itself would be quickly finished. Opposition, however, arose, and the work was delayed. The people of Jerusalem were surrounded by neighboring tribes who were jealous of their rights. They had settled in the land after the Jews had been exiled. These surrounding tribes made trouble for the Jews.

One day two prophets appeared upon the scene. These two prophets were Haggai and Zechariah, and their words rang like a command of the Lord calling the people to their unfinished task. They set to work, heartened by the prophetic message, but were again hindered by their enemies. The work, however, was finally completed in 515 B.C.

It is wonderful to see what the Exile did for the Jews. It brought about a revival of religion and a reawakening of the conscience of the people and the development of a new type of spiritual life.

To Think About: Persia at this time was in her glory. She was the world conqueror. On the other hand, Jerusalem met with delay and difficulty, and yet the faith and hope which inspired the building of the Temple still inspire and hearten us, while the Persian Empire is like a forgotten dream.

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

1. How long were the Hebrews exiles in Babylonia? Did their faith increase with the lapse of time?
2. Who was Cyrus? What interpretation does the Bible give of his life and work?
3. Who were the leaders in the plans for the return from exile?
4. What books in the Bible tell the story of the Exile and the return to Jerusalem?
5. Why did the people seek first of all to restore the altar and to rebuild the Temple?

THE SHORTER CATECHISM

Q. 25. How doth Christ execute the office of a priest?

A. Christ executeth the office of a priest, in his once offering up of himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, and reconcile us to God, and in making continual intercession for us.

REFORMS UNDER EZRA AND NEHEMIAH

THE GOLDEN TEXT: "Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith Jehovah of hosts."—Mal. 3: 7.

TEXT OF LESSON, Neh. 8: 1-3, 8-12

For entire lesson, see Ezra, chs. 7 to 10; Neh., chs. 5, 8, 13

American Standard Version

1 And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the broad place that was before the water gate; and they spake unto Ez'ra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Mo'ses, which Je-ho'vah had commanded to Is'ra-el.

2 And Ez'ra the priest brought the law before the assembly, both men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month.

3 And he read therein before the broad place that was before the water gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women, and of those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were *attentive* unto the book of the law.

* * * * *

8 And they read in the book, in the law of God, distinctly; and they gave the sense, so that they understood the reading.

9 And Ne-he-mi'ah, who was the governor, and Ez'ra the priest the scribe, and the Le'vites that taught the people, said unto all the people, This day is holy unto Je'ho-vah your God; mourn not, nor weep. For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law.

10 Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto him for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye grieved; for the joy of Je-ho'vah is your strength.

11 So the Le'vites stilled all the people, saying, Hold your peace, for the day is holy; neither be ye grieved.

12 And all the people went their way to eat, and to drink, and to send portions, and to make great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared unto them.

Authorized Version

1 And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that *was* before the water gate; and they spake unto Ez'ra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Mo'ses, which the LORD had commanded to Is'ra-el.

2 And Ez'ra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month.

3 And he read therein before the street that *was* before the water gate from the morning until midday, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people *were attentive* unto the book of the law.

* * * * *

8 So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused *them* to understand the reading.

9 ¶ And Ne-he-mi'ah, which *is* the Tir-sha'tha, and Ez'ra the priest the scribe, and the Le'vites that taught the people, said unto all the people, This day *is* holy unto the LORD your God; mourn not, nor weep. For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law.

10 Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for *this* day *is* holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the LORD is your strength.

11 So the Le'vites stilled all the people, saying, Hold your peace, for the day *is* holy; neither be ye grieved.

12 And all the people went their way to eat, and to drink, and to send portions, and to make great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared unto them.

DAILY HOME READINGS

M. June 16. Israel Separated from the Heathen. Ezra 10: 7-12.
T. June 17. A Complaint Against Oppression. Neh. 5: 1-5.
W. June 18. Nehemiah Abolishes Usury. Neh. 5: 6-13.
T. June 19. God's Law Again Proclaimed. Neh. 8: 1-8.
F. June 20. A Day of Sorrow and Joy. Neh. 8: 9-18.
S. June 21. Nehemiah Enforces the Sabbath Law. Neh. 13: 15-22.
S. June 22. The Healer of the Nations. Hos. 14: 1-8.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

It is necessary to keep in mind certain dates regarding the return of the exiles to their own land:

The period of Exile in Babylon	587 to 537 B.C.
The capture of Babylon by Cyrus	539 B.C.
The return of the Jews from Exile	537 B.C.
Period of Persian power	537 to 331 B.C.
Building of the Second Temple completed.	515 B.C.
Ezra's arrival at Jerusalem	458-457 B.C.
Nehemiah's first view	445-444 B.C.
Nehemiah's return to Persian court	433-432 B.C.
The conquest of Persia by Alexander the Great	331 B.C.

To Think About: Nations rise and fall, but God's purpose goes on unhindered.

THE PRAYER OF NEHEMIAH

Nehemiah is introduced to us in the story which begins the book called by his name. He was an officer in the palace of the Persian king at Shushan. Thirteen years had passed since the reformation under Ezra. The Temple had been rebuilt, but the fortifications of Jerusalem had not been laid, and the situation of the people was distressing.

Word was brought back from travelers to Jerusalem that things were not going well with the people there. They told a story of the poverty of the people, the broken walls and gates that had been burned with fire. Nehemiah was a patriot at heart, and while serving in the luxury of the palace his heart was with his own people at Jerusalem. The story which he had heard stunned him, and he wept bitter tears over the condition of his people.

The prayer of Nehemiah recorded in the first chapter of the Book of Nehemiah is one of the most wonderful in the Bible. It is a prayer which laid hold of God in the spirit of reverence and marvelous devotion. Then Nehemiah poured forth a confession of his own sins and of his people's sins, and pleaded with God to perfect the work which had been begun in Jerusalem. Nehemiah addressed God first, before he made any petition to the Persian king. The surest way to success is to take God into our confidence and to make him a partner in our plans.

To Think About: Prayer is the highest form of service. When David Livingstone was discouraged and lonely in the heart of the African jungle, he turned to the promise of the gospel which said, "Lo, I am with you always," and, resting his heart upon that promise, he said, "That is the word of a Gentleman of the highest honor, and that is the end of it." Trusting in that promise, he went forward with his work.

THE WORK OF NEHEMIAH

Nehemiah's prayer was quickly answered, and the king granted him a leave of absence, commissioning him to carry out his purpose in Jerusalem. He was given a military escort with authority to the princes of the provinces through which he would pass.

When he arrived at Jerusalem he made a secret investigation of the city, carefully planning so as to outwit the enemies who had brought the work of restoration to a standstill. After three days of inspection he made a tour of the city by night with a few picked men, and, having carefully examined the situation, outlined his plan to the leaders of Jerusalem. They responded with enthusiasm, "Let us rise up and build."

To Think About: Nehemiah never took a step without prayer. He made his prayer to God, and then in confidence went forward with his work. The words which are written of Nehemiah are singularly suggestive. "We made our prayer unto God, and set a watch against them day and night, because of them." This is exactly what Jesus commanded his disciples to do, "Watch and pray."

NEHEMIAH THE LEADER

Under the leadership of Nehemiah, for the first time since their return, the Jews found themselves safe and secure behind the walls of Jerusalem. The walls were finished in fifty-two days, and the brother of Nehemiah was charged with the government of the city. Having completed the building of walls, Nehemiah turned his attention toward reëstablishing order among the people. He sought to reëstablish the worship in the Temple, and to restore the law of the Lord to its rightful place.

To Think About: Sometimes God raises up a man who is not ordained to Church leadership, but who, under the power of God becomes a leader of the Church and the people. Such a man was Dwight L. Moody, who was not an ordained minister, but a layman who preached as few men have been able to preach the gospel.

TEACHING THE BIBLE

The greatest Book in the world is the Bible. The people at this time did not have the Bible as we have it, but they had certain writings of Moses and the Prophets, and the law of the Lord was in their possession. Nehemiah and Ezra brought the people face to face with the demands of the covenant-keeping God.

It was a red-letter day in the history of the returned exiles. Ezra not only read the Bible but caused the people to understand what was read. He was not only a preacher, but a teacher, and when the people heard the words of the law of the Lord they wept. Perhaps they had never heard them read before.

The law of God was like a mirror into which they looked. They beheld there their own disobedience, and they knew that they had been guilty of great sin. Nehemiah and Ezra, however, rebuked them for their sorrow. They said that instead of weeping they should rejoice. Religion is gladness, not gloom.

To Think About: The Bible is the greatest Book in the world. It has been translated into seven hundred and twenty-five different languages and dialects. Last year thirty million copies of the Bible in whole or part were issued.

RELIGION AND SERVICE

The marks of religion as suggested in the lesson are very evident. They are prayer, Bible-reading, joy, and service. The record reads, "All the people went their way to eat, and to drink, and to send portions." They shared their happiness with others. Religion is not selfish, but sacrificial.

To Think About: There is a story to this effect:

"A priest had a striking dream. He dreamed that he had ascended the ladder that reached from earth to heaven. Expectantly he knocked upon the door. Some one responded and demanded, 'Who is there?' Proudly the priest called his name. 'Who is with you?' came the reply. 'No one,' answered the priest, 'I am alone.' 'Sorry,' said the angel, 'but we are instructed never to open these gates for a single individual.' And, crestfallen and disappointed, he descended to earth."

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

1. We cannot succeed unless we are willing to overcome difficulties. Difficulties are stepping-stones to success.
2. The note of true religion is joy. A joyous religion is a safe religion.
3. The Bible needs to be interpreted. Teaching and preaching go together.
4. Read the complete story of the life and work of Nehemiah. What do you most admire in this remarkable man?

THE SHORTER CATECHISM

Q. 26. How doth Christ execute the office of a king?

A. Christ executeth the office of a king, in subduing us to himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies.

REVIEW: REHOBOAM TO NEHEMIAH

THE GOLDEN TEXT: "Righteousness exalteth a nation; But sin is a reproach to any people." —Prov. 14: 34.

DEVOTIONAL READING, Micah 4: 1-5.

DAILY HOME READINGS

M. June 23. The Day of Jehovah. Amos 5: 18-24.
T. June 24. Formalism and Righteousness. Isa. 1: 10-20.
W. June 25. The Glory of the Gospel. Jer. 31: 27-34.
T. June 26. The Equal Way of the Lord. Ezek. 18: 25-32.
F. June 27. The Victory of Righteousness. Mal., ch. 4.
S. June 28. The Judgment of the Nations. Joel 3: 9-16.
S. June 29. God's Promise of Peace. Micah 4: 1-5.

THE DIVIDED KINGDOM

The lessons of the quarter are divided into four sections: the Divided Kingdom; the Northern Kingdom; the Southern Kingdom; and the Restoration.

The first lesson tells the story of the way in which the kingdom which had been united under Saul, David, and Solomon, had become divided into the Northern and the Southern Kingdom. Jeroboam became the first king of Israel, the Northern Kingdom, and Rehoboam the first king of Judah, the Southern Kingdom.

Judah remained true to the house of David. The people of Israel, known as the Ten Tribes, rebelled, and set up their own government.

To Think About: There is truth in the old proverb, "In union there is strength." The whole territory of the Divided Kingdom did not make up the strength of the old United Kingdom. A nation divided against itself will ultimately fall. Assyria destroyed the Northern Kingdom, and later Babylonia destroyed Judah. Is there any lesson in this for the Church of the present day? Why is it not possible for us to have one united Christian Church?

THE NORTHERN KINGDOM

The lessons grouped under the section treating of the history of the Northern Kingdom are three, the Easter Lesson having place in this section. The Northern Kingdom continued for a period of more than two hundred years, nineteen kings belonging to nine different families occupying the throne.

Jeroboam had set an evil example concerning religion, and almost all succeeding kings came under his evil influence. Our interest in the Northern Kingdom does not arise from the story of the kings, but from the splendid work of the prophets. Elijah was like a walking conscience in the evil days of Ahab and Jezebel. He defied the idolatry of the land and revealed God in his righteousness and justice. Elisha, too, stood out from the evil tendencies of that time as a man who spoke a living message from God.

The voice of Amos, the prophet, was a cry for justice, and an appeal against the iniquity of the upper classes, the extravagance of the court, and the indifference to the poverty and suffering of the poor. The Prophet Hosea spoke in terms of tenderness and love. His was not a voice of vengeance but the voice of God who like a father was calling to his children to return. We see in this period two marked tendencies; the tendency of the priests to dominate the life of the people with ritual, and the challenge of the prophets, who appealed to the people to make their hearts right with God.

To Think About: There is such a thing as punishment which admits of no reformation. Israel, the Northern Kingdom, was not reformed or transformed, but destroyed. "The wages of sin is death."

THE SOUTHERN KINGDOM

The Southern Kingdom lasted for three hundred and fifty years. It had nineteen kings, all belonging to one family, the family of David. One ruler, Queen Athaliah, daughter of Jezebel, did not belong to the house of David, but she was never crowned.

The Southern Kingdom had a mingling of good and bad rulers. A few wonderful kings reigned over Judah, and left the inheritance of a righteous life. Such men as Asa, Jehoshaphat, Joash, Hezekiah, and Josiah did that which was right in the sight of the Lord.

On the other hand Rehoboam, Jehoram, Manasseh, and the later kings of Judah followed not in the way of the Lord, and led their people into paths of misfortune. The interesting thing noted in connection with the history of Israel is reflected in a stronger light in the history of Judah. Kings came and went. Their life and work became a memory, but the ministry of the prophets endured and still endures. The names of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel live to-day. The messages of these great men of God endure because they revealed God in such a way that their messages are timeless.

To Think About: Israel was destroyed, and perished. We speak to-day of the Ten Lost Tribes. Judah on the other hand was carried into exile but was restored again to her own nation.

THE RESTORATION

The period of restoration following the Babylonian Exile brings us to the close of the Old Testament. Two great characters stand out in the history of this restoration period.

One was Ezra; the other was Nehemiah. Ezra was a scribe, a man who made a profession of his religion. Nehemiah was a layman, a statesman who made religion the chief end of his life. God in his providence brought these two prophets together and they coöperated in restoring the true religion and in establishing peace among their own people. God often sends forth his workers two by two.

CORRELATED TOPICS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE'S MEETINGS OR EXPRESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Topic for April 6, 1924. Reasons for Heeding Experience. I Kings 12: 12-15

A Foolish King

1. What lessons could Rehoboam have learned from Solomon's reign?
2. Why did Solomon's reign end poorly?
3. What treatment from the hands of Rehoboam did the nation need?
4. What advice did the old men give Rehoboam?
5. What did the young men tell him to do?
6. What was the result of his bad choice?

Experience, a Good Teacher

1. Why is experience a good teacher?
2. Why should older people give better advice than those who are young?
3. It is said that education shortens experience. How does it do that?
4. How does "the weight of years" equip parents for advising their children?
5. Why is it a good thing to heed the teachings of a minister of the gospel?
6. The Bible is full of the experiences of real men. How does this fact make it a good guide for you?

A Project

Let the society organize a cabinet or council to advise the younger members of the school.

Topic for April 13, 1924. The Great Decision. I Kings 18: 20-24

Two Sides

1. Who was Elijah? On what side did he stand?
2. Who was Ahab? What can you say of his character and that of his wife?
3. Who were the prophets of Baal? What do you know about Baal worship?
4. After whom were the people of Israel following—God or Baal?
5. What was the danger of "limping between the two sides"?
6. What sort of contest did Elijah propose?
7. What was the effect of the outcome of the contest on the people?

Which Master?

1. Two masters contend for your life. Who are they?

2. Why is a decision for Christ important?
3. When should the decision be made?
4. Why should the decision be made early in life? (Not one person in a thousand makes the decision for Christ after the age of thirty.)
5. Why is not making a choice for Christ a choice?
6. Why is it impossible to experience spiritual growth until a decision for Christ has been made?

A Project

Coöperate with the pastor and superintendent in planning for Decision Day in the Sunday school.

Topic for April 20, 1924. Faith in a Risen Saviour. Mark 16: 1-15

The Flickering Torch Revived

1. Why were the disciples fearful at the death of Jesus?
2. What was the effect of the crucifixion on their faith?
3. What was the effect of the resurrection on their faith?
4. Why did the resurrection have such an effect on their faith?
5. Why do we say that the Church was founded on the belief in the resurrection of Christ?

The Empty Tomb and Our Faith

1. What proofs have we that Jesus rose from the dead?
2. What is the significance of the resurrection of Christ?
3. What great enemy did Christ overcome by his resurrection?
4. What is the message of the empty tomb?
5. What does it mean to you to have a living Lord?
6. What effect should faith in a risen Saviour have on our lives?
7. How far may we go in trusting the Saviour who died and who rose again?

A Project

Let the society send Easter cards to those who are not apt to receive them from others.

Topic for April 27, 1924. Business and the Soul. Amos 8: 4-10

Business Rampant

1. What was the social and industrial situation in Israel in Amos' time?
2. What condition in the nation called for a "cry for justice"?

3. What did Amos say about selling on the Sabbath?
4. What was wrong with the weights and measures?
5. Why did the rich get richer, and the poor get poorer?
6. What reaction did the oppression have on the poor? on the rich?
7. Which class, the rich or the poor, suffered more spiritually? Why do you think so?

Business in Bounds

1. Does the Bible commend business? Give references.
2. What are some of the temptations in business?
3. Why should business be a means and not an end?
4. What is the harm in Sunday work?
5. Which is the more important—character or cash? Why?
6. How can business be made to help in character-building?
7. Does religion have any place in business? Why?
8. Name some business men who have advanced the Kingdom by their gifts.

A Project

Let the society endeavor to make the list of tithers one hundred per cent.

Topic for May 4, 1924. Religious Education and the Nation. II Kings 17: 13-18

Lessons Not Learned

1. Who were the religious educators in Israel? II Kings 17:13.
2. What kind of reception did Hosea and Amos receive?
3. To what extent did Israel practice what the prophets taught?
4. Why did Israel fall into the hands of Assyria?
5. "Israel fell in a deeper and more significant way." What was the reason for this fall?
6. What other nations have fallen because they did not learn religious lessons?

A Nation Learning Religion

1. How can religion be taught?
2. Name some ways in which religion is being taught in America.
3. Why is America a Christian nation?
4. What place does the Bible have in the nation?
5. For what purpose were Harvard, Yale, and Princeton Universities founded?
6. What progress is religious education making in the colleges and universities?
7. Why is the Sunday school important?
8. How may Daily Vacation Bible Schools help in religious education?

9. What is a Week-day Church School? What of its future?

Some Possible Projects

Enlist members who will serve as workers in a Daily Vacation Bible School in your church.

Coöperate with your pastor or religious director in sending delegates to young people's summer conferences.

Topic for May 11, 1924. The Drug Menace. II Kings 11: 15-18

Ancient Foes Slain

1. Jehoshaphat made peace between Judah and Israel by uniting his son in marriage to Athaliah, the daughter of idolatrous Jezebel, Ahab's wife. What is the danger of compromising with evil?

2. Recall the wooden horse that was taken into the walls of the city of Troy. What was the result?

3. What are some of the evils that have been brought into our nation?

4. Athaliah and the priests of Baal were slain. What is the best way to get rid of the nation's evils?

An Enemy To-Day

1. "The United States uses more opium per person than any other nation in the world." What does this fact mean to you?

2. From what substance is morphine derived? Heroin?

3. What is cocaine?

4. Why is the "dope" peddler "the arch fiend of our civilization"?

5. Very few drug addicts are ever redeemed. To what conclusion does this statement lead you?

6. When the addict is deprived of his drug, he resorts to crime to procure it. How can crime be reduced?

7. The narcotic problem is an unsolved problem. It is said that education as regards the harm of the "dope" evil is the only means by which it will be eradicated. What do you think of this as a solution of the problem?

8. What has happened since the disastrous effects of the alcohol habit have been taught in the schools of America?

9. What can we expect if the dangers of "dope" are made known to the boys and the girls?

A Project

Let the secretary of the society write to The Board of Christian Education of the Presbyterian Church, Department of Temperance and Moral Welfare, Columbia Bank Building, Pittsburgh, Pennsyl-

vania, for literature. Distribute this to the younger members of the Sunday school.

Topic for May 18, 1924. A God-Given Life Work. Isa. 6: 1-8

A Young Man's Call

1. To what office was Isaiah called?
2. What is a prophet?
3. Name the steps in the call of Isaiah.
4. Whose presence filled the Temple?
5. When Isaiah saw God, what did he see in himself?
6. What words of Isaiah express repentance?
7. What was God's messenger's answer to "Woe is me"?
8. In what manner did Isaiah answer the commission which God gave him?

God Calls To-Day

1. Why should we have a great life work?
2. Why is it unsafe to undertake life's tasks without a divine call?
3. What constitutes a call to a life work?
4. In what spirit should we entertain God's call to a life work?
5. Why is the consciousness of sin and the forgiveness of sin essential to receiving the call?
6. Why should forgiveness make us anxious to go on God's errands?
7. Why can we depend upon God to direct us into the proper field of service?
8. God speaks in a personal way to each individual. He wants each to be himself, but his plan is that each will reach the limit of his capacity. All are created equal in God's sight, but all have not the same abilities. But all are responsible for the talents that they have. Are you fulfilling God's ideal for your life?

A Project

At summer conferences a call is made for those who will give their lives to Christian service. Devise means for raising money to send some of the members of your society to a conference.

Topic for May 25, 1924. Loyalty to a Life Work. Jer. 11: 18-20

God's Man Under Fire

1. The men of Jeremiah's home town became hostile to him because of his prophesying. But he persevered in spite of threats to take his life. What trait of character does this show?
2. The hostility which began at his home town spread throughout the country. Why did he still remain faithful?

3. Thrown into prison, cast into a dungeon, he did not waver. What place does Jeremiah hold in the roll of the loyal?

A List of the Loyal

1. What was the life work of Christopher Columbus? How did he show loyalty to it?
2. What was the life work of Samuel F. B. Morse? What opposition did he resist in accomplishing his end?
3. What was Lincoln's life task? What can you say of his loyalty?

Following in Their Train

1. What were some of the temptations which might have kept these great men from achievement?
2. How may love of pleasure hinder a great life accomplishment?
3. More failures are made through lack of persevering than from any other cause. How much truth is there in this statement?
4. How does a sense of having been divinely called help to keep a man faithful to his life work?
5. To what life work do you believe God has called you? What resistance are you making to the temptations which would draw you away from this work?

A Project

Let the society plan a life-recruiting meeting.

Topic for June 1, 1924. Life's Second Chances. II Chron. 36: 17-23

A Nation's Second Chance

1. What was the cause of Judah's fall and captivity? See the golden text for to-day.
2. Into what country was Judah carried captive?
3. How long was Judah in captivity? See Jer. 25: 11, 12.
4. What is significant about the last two verses of II Chronicles? Read them again.
5. Who gave Judah her second chance?

Our Merciful God

1. What was David's second chance?
2. Giovanni Papini, an Italian novelist, was an infidel and wrote a book of blasphemy. But God gave him a second chance, and now he has written a "Life of Christ." What does this illustrate concerning our God?
3. What would you expect in a book entitled, "Twice-Born Men"? Read this book by Harold Begbie. It shows how God gives men another chance.

4. How is the Salvation Army being used to give men a second chance?

Always Another Chance

1. How may a failure prove to be a blessing if we try again?
2. What may failure teach?
3. Why should the gospel of the second chance insure us against discouragement?
4. What was Peter's failure? What was his second chance?

A Project

City missions offer second chances to men and women. Let the society plan to hold a meeting in a mission.

Topic for June 8, 1924. Our Brother's Keepers. Ezek. 34: 1-6

"Blind Mouths"

1. Careless bishops in the Church have been spoken of as "blind mouths." A bishop is an overseer, a feeder of the flock. Pastors are bishops. If the seer is blind he cannot lead, and if the feeder becomes instead an eater—a mouth—then the flock will go hungry. How does v. 2 accord with this idea?
2. Why is it such a great sin for a shepherd to feed himself to the neglect of those under his care?
3. What is the measure of responsibility of those who become leaders?

Shifting the Responsibility

1. What was Cain's reply to God when he was asked concerning Abel? Read Gen. 4: 9.
2. Cain was older than Abel. How does age make men responsible for those who are younger?
3. How does experience fit us for leadership?
4. For the most part, how have men accepted this responsibility?

On the Lookout

1. What duties have young people to one another?
2. What should be the influence of young people over children?
3. To what extent do young people influence children?
4. Should a college student smoke? Why?

A Project

Have a committee to counsel with the experienced society next below that using this topic.

Topic for June 15, 1924. Our Duties to the Church. Ezra 3: 8-13

Everyone at Work

1. When the Israelites came back to Jerusalem from their seventy years' exile in Babylon, they rebuilt the Temple. Note the division of labor in the topic passage. Whose work was the more important, that of the builders of the foundations or that of the priests?
2. How varied is the work of the Church?
3. Why is it possible for everyone to find a place of service in the Church?
4. What is the minister's particular work in the Church?
5. What is an elder, and what does he do?
6. Name one thing that would help the Church to grow.

Things That All Can Do

1. Why is regular church attendance a good habit?
2. What was Jesus' church-attendance habit?
3. What is the advantage of Church members meeting together?
4. Why should we give financial support to the Church?
5. Why is it a good thing to take part in the services?
6. Which is more important, ushering, or singing in the choir?
7. Why should we pray for the Church?
8. How can we aid the Church by working in the Sunday school, in the expressional society, and in the mission guild?

A Project

Enlist the members of the society in a go-to-church club.

Topic for June 22, 1924. Life's Ideals. Neh. 8: 9-12

Ideals and Character

1. Ezra and Nehemiah were men of high ideals. They called the people back from their sorrow to the joy of Jehovah. They had come back from Babylon to Jerusalem, which had been ruined. What does this prove concerning their ideals?
2. All the Israelites had not returned from Babylon. They were satisfied to be rich and honored in the land of exile. What does this fact prove concerning the ideals of those who remained?
3. What influence did Ezra and Nehemiah have upon the course of history?

The Power of High Ideals

1. Where have you gained your ideals?
2. What part has the home played in giving you high ideals?
3. What has the Church contributed toward giving you high ideals?

4. What has the school done for you in giving you higher ideals?
5. To what extent, so far as you can judge, have these ideals changed your life?
6. What ideals did Jesus introduce into the world's thought?
7. What has been the effect of these ideals on character and on the world?
8. What makes the conception of the Kingdom of heaven an ideal?
9. Why do we need high ideals?

A Project

Let the society plan a reading contest among the members. Missionary biography might well be used.

Topic for June 29, 1924. Friendliness, an Asset in Life. Ezra 7: 6; Neh. 1: 1-3

Being Friends

1. Ezra was a priest who came to Jerusalem thirteen years before Nehemiah. Nehemiah was a cupbearer to the king of Persia, was made a governor of Judah, and he went to join Ezra at Jerusalem. These men worked in harmony to establish the exiles in their devastated and neglected land. Of what value was their friendliness to the Israelites?
2. What is the price that friends have to pay for their friendship?

How Friendliness Counts

1. How has friendliness helped you?
2. How has friendliness helped some of those whom you know?
3. How is friendliness an aid to business?
4. What is the value of friendliness in the home?
5. What place has friendliness in the solution of the world's problems?
6. Why is friendliness necessary in missionary work?

Our Great Friend

1. Who is man's greatest Friend?
2. What can you say of the breadth of Jesus' friendliness?
3. How genuine is Jesus' friendship?
4. How enduring is Jesus' friendship? Read Matt. 28: 20b.
5. What are you doing to return his friendship?

A Project

Have a Big Brothers' and Big Sisters' Committee to make friends with the younger members of the church school.

The International Sunday School Lessons

UNIFORM SERIES FOR JULY, AUGUST, SEPTEMBER, 1924

The Life of Jesus. (Harmony of the Gospels.) Opening Period of Christ's Ministry

July 6.—The Birth of Jesus.
Lesson Material: Luke 2: 7-20.

July 13—The Boyhood of Jesus.
Lesson Material: Luke 2: 40-52.

July 20—The Baptism of Jesus.
Lesson Material: Mark 1: 1-11.

July 27—The Temptation of Jesus.
Lesson Material: Matt. 4: 1-11.

Aug. 3—The First Disciples of Jesus.
Lesson Material: John 1: 35-51. Print vs. 35-46.

Aug. 10—The First Miracle of Jesus.
Lesson Material: John 2: 1-11.

Aug. 17—Jesus Cleanses the Temple.
Lesson Material: John 2: 13-22. (May be used with temperance applications.)

Aug. 24—Jesus Talks with Nicodemus.
Lesson Material: John 3: 1-17. Print vs. 1-3, 8-17.

Aug. 31—Jesus Talks with a Samaritan Woman.
Lesson Material: John 4: 4-42. Print vs. 7-14, 24-26, 31-35.

Sept. 7—Jesus Heals a Nobleman's Son.
Lesson Material: John 4: 46-54.

Sept. 14—Jesus Driven from Nazareth.
Lesson Material: Luke 4: 16-30.

Sept. 21—Jesus Makes a Missionary Tour.
Lesson Material: Mark 1: 35-45.

Sept. 28—Review: Opening Period of Christ's Ministry.

Order of Service for Second Quarter, 1924[1]

LEADER RISES.—DOORS CLOSED FOR SILENCE.

OPENING SENTENCES:

"The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for such doth the Father seek to be his worshippers. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth."

INVOCATION AND THE LORD'S PRAYER.

DOORS OPENED.

PRAISE HYMN.—(All standing.) The following hymns from "Alleluia" are suggested for use with the lessons of the quarter in the order given: Numbers 15, 54, 72, 277, 276, 275, 224, 79, 90, 109, 198, 180, 302.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—A selected psalm and the lesson text.

PRAYER.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND SPECIAL MESSAGES.

PRAYER HYMN.—(All standing.) "Alleluia," Numbers 18, 59, 73, 106, 129, 209, 229, 249, 256, 257, 295, 270, 298.

THE LESSON PERIOD, with Offerings and Records.

PRESENTATION OF REPORTS AND OFFERINGS.

CONSECRATION HYMN.—(All standing.) "Alleluia," Numbers 176, 95, 77, 210, 220, 222, 227, 288, 259, 269, 272, 297, 303.

PRAYER, BENEDICTION, AND SILENT PRAYER.

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[1] Extra copies of this Order of Service, on heavy paper, may be ordered of the publishers at 50 cents a hundred.

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